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THE
INSPIRATION
OF THE
New Testament
Asserted and Explain'd.
IN
ANSWER
TO SOME
MODERN WRITERS.

By ^{Claude} C. G. LAMOTHE,
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^{minister of St. Mary Church, London}

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Tho. Bennet*, at the *Half-Moon* in *S. Paul's Church-Yard*. 1694.

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THE PREFACE.

THET who have a Reverence for the Holy Scripture will never be offended to see the number of the Champions of it encrease. 'Tis known that in the Primitive Ages, when Religion was continually assaig'd, the Church was never disgraced in the Apologies which the Christians so frequently set forth. All those that knew how to write, made it a part of their Duty to uphold Christianity. And there is no question but that this was one of the most Potent means that Providence made use of, to advance the Triumphs of the Religion of Jesus Christ. We are in an Age wherein the Scripture is dishonoured, sometimes after one manner, sometimes after another: So that I cannot believe when Liberti- nism exerts it self so boldly, that Christians will grow weary of seeing the Number of Apologists increase, who take upon them to defend that Scripture which made them Christians.

The Preface.

We dare not presume to say, that all who have shaken the Authority of Scripture were profest Libertines, in regard that some Persons of worth have upheld Propositions, which being carry'd a little too far, do great mischief to that Book, for which in other respects they declare that they have an esteem even to Veneration. 'Tis not possible to dive into the secret intentions of Authors, so as to know whether it be out of Impudence, or through a hankering after Libertinism, that they suffer these bold and dangerous streaks to escape their Pen. The Libertine counterfeits himself sometimes to be Orthodox, and a lover of Truth; and he propases his doubts with a seeming Ingenuity, and vigorously asserts the Truth for fear of being suspected. Sometimes also a faithful disciple of the Truth expresses himself in a feeble and anawling manner; and by his doubts and scruples gives an advantage to his Enemies. God alone knows the bottom of the Heart, and it is our Duty to leave it to him to decide the intentions of Authors, and to endeavour to defend the Truth against all manner of Objections, on which side soever they are made.

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There appear'd within these few Years a certain Treatise which attack'd the inspiration of the Sacred Scripture. I shall not go about to inform my self of the real Design which the Author had in composing a Work so injurious to Scripture; but I thought it necessary to prevent the evil Consequences of such a dangerous Book. Monsieur Wittius of Holland, and Mr. Lowth, a Divine of Oxford, Father Simon, and Father Le Vassour have set forth Answers to it which I have read. But in regard it was their only Design to trace their Adversary step by step, and not to handle this matter thoroughly; there is therefore still room left for a new management of it. The English Divine indeed in my Opinion has gone somewhat farther than the rest; but I shall take the liberty to say, that he might have built the Inspiration of the Holy Writings upon better foundations: that he has not so sufficiently explained the nature of it as he might have done, and that he has ventur'd to advance some things, which in my judgement, need a great deal of softning. I hope he will be pleas'd to pardon the Expression, without which I could not be able to justify my Design.

sign of writing after him. In his Preface he acknowledges that the matter is nice and new; and after he has besought the Readers not to censure him, as if he intended to betray the cause which he defends, he invites them to uphold it themselves. According to this Invitation, I shall make some steps in order to it. If my Example should excite some other more Learned Pen to write upon the same Subject, the Publick will be oblig'd to me for it. I shall be well satisfied with my weak endeavours, provided they may give occasion to the publishing any Treatise, that shall maintain the Inspiration of the Holy Writings, as effectually as the truth of them hath been asserted.

It will be found that I have tied myself to consider only the Writings of the New Testament: there was no meddling with the Books of the Old Testament, without cutting out too much work for myself; in a time when the Public receives not well any but small Treatises, especially in matter of Divinity. Therefore, that I might accommodate my self to the Palate of the Age, I was enforc'd to shorten my Subject. After I had taken this Resolution, it was no difficult thing for me

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me to chuse which of the two Parts of Scripture it behov'd me to handle: So that I determin'd in favour of the New Testament; as being that Part upon which there has least been said. We have several Books in defence of the Inspiration of the Prophets and their Writings, because they have been so often attack'd. But the Writers of the New Testament having peaceably enjoy'd the Honour pay'd them by the uninterrupted belief of their Inspiration, Authors have not made it so much their Business to examine the nature of it; or if any Libertine has attempted to contest it with them, they have altogether relied upon the belief which the Church has had of it from time to time.

Besides this I may say, that by maintaining the New Testament I defend the Old: The Apostles have given such honourable Testimonials of the Writings of the Prophets, that no Man can better maintain their honour than by demonstrating that Men inspir'd by the Holy Ghost, have given Testimony to them.

But the chief Reason which made me chuse to defend the Writings of the New Testament is this; because it is

The Preface.

properly the Book that makes us Christians: It is our Duty indeed to read the Writings of the Prophets: there are to be seen those Oracles, the Accomplishment of which is of glorious Consequence to the Gospel: there we are inform'd of a great number of Actions, wherein God appears magnificent in his Works; and thence may be drawn Instructions effectual for the Sanctification of the Heart: all these things were written for our Instruction: but still a Christian must chiefly repair to the Writings of the New Covenant: there it is, that he ought to be most intent and steadfast: from thence it is, that he is chiefly oblig'd to receive his Faith and his Instructions, in order to put himself into a state of Salvation. The New Testament is that Book which God deliver'd as a Legacy to Mankind, in these later times. 'Tis our Duty to cherish, as much as in us lies, the Respect which is due to that Sacred Book; and to prevent it from being reckoned in the Catalogue of Common Writings; for fear the Religion which it teaches us, should be look'd upon as a Piece of Human Inventions.

**THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES**

Inspir'd, &c.

CHAP. I.

*The State and Importance of the
Question, and Division of the Work.*

IT being my design to treat of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament, I cannot forbear exactly to set down the state of the Question. Which being done, it will be found that all my Arguments aim at the same Mark; and that I have made it my business not to amuse my Reader with any unprofitable Digression.

In the first place then, the Reader is to be admonish'd that the Dispute is not here, which are Canonical Books; and which Apocryphal. We suppose that those with whom we Contend, agree that there is no contradiction to be made against the Canonical Authority of the New Testament, according as we enjoy it at this day; but that those Sacred Books were actually written or dictated by the

The Holy Scriptures Inspired.

Authors, whose Names are affixed to 'em. 'Tis agreed that these Holy Men both saw and heard the matters of Fact which they relate, and which they have written with extraordinary Fidelity and Sincerity. Which being granted, the Work begun is already in so great a forwardness, that there is no need at all of entering into the discussion of several Difficulties which concern the Question relating to the Apocryphal Books. By this means also we are freed from the trouble of proving that the Sacred Books were written by Men who were Witnesses of all the matters of Fact which are contain'd in the History of Jesus Christ, or who themselves wrought great Miracles, by which it appear'd that their Mission was Celestial. In a word, we are agreed upon the truth of these Books; so that nothing remains farther to be known, but whither they are inspir'd. The Verity and the Inspiration make two different *Questions*, of which the first is decided: the Sacred Books of the New Testament are stedfastly and undeniably true; at least so far as concerns Essential Things. The main dispute is, whether they are inspir'd or no? So that there are some who let 'em alone with the Honour of being true, but ravish from them that of Inspiration. 'Tis against these Innovators that I undertake the defence of the New Testament, of which I maintain'd

tain'd alike, and equally assert both the Inspiration and the Truth, even to the meanest Circumstances.

I could wish with all my heart, that I might be able to handle this Question without chusing any certain Adversary. My aim was to examine this important Matter, without having any particular Author in view. But I found that the Error which I oppose, is so little known, that if they did not see it supported by some one or other, Men would believe I broached some Chimera of my own, for the exercise of my Fancy. Besides, that the State of a Question is never better understood, then when it is taken out of some Book, wherein it has been already discuss'd.

First of all, *M. N.* Author of a Treatise published in *Holland*, presented himself to my thoughts. I know no body that has more formally assail'd the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament. *Spinoza* led the way of the same Undertaking; but there was little heed given to that Author, because all Men knew he had no Religion; and that moreover the obscurity and negligence that appear in all his Works, have rendered them less formidable; for that such Adversaries are not much to be fear'd. But *M. N.* has given a more subtle and more dangerous Air to *Spinoza's* Notions and has digested them into a System, of which

P. 281.
Sentiments of
some Divines, &c.

which I shall quote a brief Abstract; as near as I can, in his own words. I begin, says he, with the New Testament, which is the principal foundation of our Faith.

1. Jesus Christ was absolutely infallible; it becometh us blindly to believe whatever he tells us, because he said it; and for that God gave us his Testimony, that he said nothing but the Truth.

2. In regard we have no Writings that ever Jesus Christ himself wrote, we ought to believe what his Apostles have deliver'd to us concerning his Life and Doctrine, because God has given us his Testimonial of of them by means of the Miracles which he wrought in their Favour, and for that they have seal'd the Truth with their own Blood. It might be that in some Circumstances of little Importance, they might relate some things not altogether so exactly as they pass; but there is no reason that they should agree precisely in every thing to the minutest Title.

282. Ibid.

3. It becometh us to distinguish two Things in the Epistles of the Disciples of Jesus Christ: there are the same Doctrines there, which we find in the Evangelists; and the Apostles frequently assure us that they learn them from Jesus Christ. There are others which the Apostles utter of their own Heads, or which they infer from the Old Testament by divers Consequences. We must believe the first for the same reason, that we ought to admit the Gospels; that is to say, because

of

of the Authority of Christ, who preached them to the Jews. We must admit the Second, because they contain nothing but what is most conformable to the Doctrines of Jesus Christ, in which it was founded upon good sense. We must also observe, that in regard they had not extraordinary Inspiration to write their Epistles, they intermix several things that relate to their own Designs, and their particular Affairs, wherein it behoves us to be careful how we search for Mysteries. Such are the Salutations at the end of the Epistles; St. Paul's Order to Timothy to take Mark along with him in his return to him; the Advice which he gave him to drink Wine sparingly for his Stomach's sake, and by reason of his frequent Distempers.

4. There are several Prophecies scatter'd up and down in these Epistles, and the Apocalypse is absolutely Prophetical. It behoves us to give Credit to these Revelations, because it was God who sent them immediately to his Apostles. It is also easy to distinguish some other Things, which the Apostles never propounded but only as Conjectures.

After M. N has Epitomiz'd his System, he believes he has levell'd the way to Heaven, and insults over our Divines, in saying, That it seems evident, that in regard the new Opinions introduced into Religion since the death of the Apostles, are not to be maintain'd; instead of being advantageous to the Christian Religion, they are extremely prejudicial to it. There is
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that Inspiration attributed to the Apostles, which they never pretended to have, and of which there is not any footsteps to be seen in their Writings.

This is only an applauding of himself; but I hope, the Author will meet with but few Men that judge as he does, of his new Theology. For so far is it from being advantageous to Christianity, that it is evident, and very evident too, that it sets it upon the brink of a Precipice. We understand from a Friend of M. N's, that this pretended Discovery has been look'd upon by several, as a * Step that leads directly to *Deism*; and the Author likewise is accus'd of favouring that abominable Opinion.

* Defence
of the
Senti-
ments,
&c.
P. 218.

'Tis not for me to judge of Monsieur N's Intention; I know not whether he inclines toward *Deism* or no; besides that I am willing to believe he does not; for why should I attribute to an Author a Sentiment which he seems to detest; especially when a man is brought in question who conceals himself, and who is not exactly known but only by venting his Opinions among us. I keep close to his Writing. That gives me sufficient reason to say, that if he be not a *Deist*, he has done the *Deists* a very great kindness, as also all those Libertines that could wish there were no Christian Religion at all. They find very near what they look for in the New System, which delivers them out

out of several streights, and which reduces Christianity to nothing, or within a little of nothing. Is not this to favour *Deism*?

Since I am now upon the Point of the weight of this new Religion, the Vanity of which I shall in the Series of this Discourse endeavour to show; I must needs say, that a man may observe how that this new Religion allows the Christians almost nothing of Inspir'd: It supposes indeed that Jesus Christ was infallible; but that signifies little, because Jesus Christ does not speak to us either *word* or in writing. We must have recourse to the Evangelists who were persons of Credit, and who have faithfully related to us what they both saw and heard. Some Body perhaps will add, that they have been good men who have left behind them in their Histories several marks of their Simplicity; their Logick was false; they had not very good Memories, notwithstanding all their Sincerity, so that they have assuredly but marr'd the Doctrine of their Master. We must acknowledge that these Suppositions which agree very well with *M. N's* System, create very great Scruples about the Gospels. Besides, they open a passage for several Niceties, that may be very inconvenient for Christians that are desirous to ground their Faith upon that part of the New Testament.

What

What say they of those other Writings which Providence has joyn'd to the Gospel? They are Works entirely Human, except the Apocalyps, to which they pay the Honour of Believing that it is absolutely Prophetic. In the other Books they also discern some glimmerings of Light, some Prophetic Plights. Were it not for that, they are to be look'd upon as no other than little Books of Devotion, or as short Commentaries upon the Gospel, in the Composition of which, the Holy Ghost never in any manner of way concern'd himself. When men are arriv'd at such a Point, as to put aside the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, *S. James*, *S. Peter*, *S. Jude*, and *S. Jude* must be look'd upon as Doctors that only explain Religion as well as they can; they must be only simple Artists who, without Education or Learning, took all their Instruction from their Piety, after they had run through a slender Course in Theology with Jesus Christ. As for *S. Paul* who had something a better Education than the rest, they will say he had this disadvantage, that he was not an Eye-witness, as they were, of the Principal matters of Fact in the Gospel, and that what he learns from Revelations could not be so evident, as it like his Companions, he had seen and felt. It will be said, that at most, he understood but as much as they did, and that he ought not to be believ'd,

lion'd, but in such Parts where he con-
 firms the History of the Gospel. There-
 fore in regard S. Paul does not pretend
 to the Office of an Historian, he is not to
 be credited but in some few Places. His
 Principal Character is that of a Doctor,
 who explains and argues. Upon those
 occasions, that is to say, quite through-
 out all his Epistles, it shall be lawful to
 appeal from S. Paul to the Tribunal of
 Human Logic. Since that Apostle is
 to be look'd upon as no other than a per-
 son of good ability to hold an Argument,
 seeing he was not way inspir'd. If such
 a System should get footing in the World,
 what would remain of Inspir'd among
 Christians? Very little: for by that
 means they take from us three fourth
 parts of the New Testament. There
 would no longer be one Book of it in-
 spir'd: it might indeed contain something
 inspir'd; but it would be no more inspir'd
 in the composition of it, than any other
 Book wherein an ordinary Author should
 have insert'd Doctrines which Heaven
 had formerly reveal'd. For as those in-
 serted Doctrines would not make the
 Book to be inspir'd, so neither would some
 Oracles scatter'd here and there in the
 New Testament, appropriate Inspiration
 to that Book. From whence I conclude,
 that when the Primitive and the New
 Christians profess'd to believe that the
 Sacred Books of the New Testament
 were

were inspir'd, they never pretended barely to say, that the Apostles knew by Inspiration certain things which they had inserted therein, but that it was their Opinion, that the Book is self, or to explain my self more clearly, the Composition of the Book was the work of the Holy Ghost. This is a Reflection which I desire the Reader to remember, when I come to discourse of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books in General.

In that sense that *M. N.* would have us conceive what the New Testament is, it contains many human things about which it is lawful to dispute, whenever *S. Paul* or any other Apostle shall hold any Argument which is not conformable to *M. N.*'s Principles, He shall answer, This is no more than the Argument of a mere man; let us see whether his Argument agrees with the *Stoics* Logic: If the Apostle has not follow'd the Rules of Consequences, we may imagine that we have no reason to hearken to him. He's an Apostle ——— that's no matter ——— when an Apostle wanders out of the way, I am not bound to follow him. *St. Paul* applies to Jesus Christ several Prophecies which the Holy Ghost appropriates to God in the Old Testament. And from thence a very strong Argument is drawn to prove the Divinity of

of Jesus Christ. The Socinians judge it a very hard matter to answer some parts of the first Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Henceforward there will

be no longer any difficulty about any of all those Oracles, if M. N. may be believed. There needs no more than to say, that St. Paul understood not the Oracles of the Old Testament; and therefore it shall be lawful to examine that Apostle by the Rules of Grammar and Logic. The Socinians are extremely obliged to M. N. for helping them to a way to rid themselves of all their perplexing Doubts, if they

are hardy enough to adopt him. Several among them have testified a great respect for the Scripture at the same time that they dishonour it by wrested Interpretations: they profess however to believe that it is the Work of God; that it is inspir'd in all the parts of it; that it contains no Contradiction, and that there is no receding from this Principle, without endangering the Christian Religion. Now while they hold such Ma-

See the *Racov. Cat. p. 47.*
If to two Interpretations of a very difficult place, we add a third.

Voxog. Prolegom. in N. T. c. 4. Wherefore the Authority of these Books is as great as that of God himself. So that when we read this Sacred Volume, or hear it read, we ought to think, that we hear God himself speaking from Heaven. *Id. in c. 1. Matth. v. 21.* For though all the holy Scripture be inspir'd by God, and that all the sacred Writers were as it were the Amanuenses of the Holy Ghost.

Vid. ibid. Prolegom. in N. T. c. 4. toward the end, and in 2. *Matth. v. 6.*

xims as these, it is impossible but that the *Sacraments* must meet with great difficulties in the Scripture. But if they embrace *M. N's* Opinion, they will find a large Fountain of ready Answers; and in truth it may be said, that there are no Errors which may not be upheld by this new Method.

Though it should be said, that this new Method tends to annihilate the Use of the New Testament, and to bring men back to natural Reason, as the only Light which they ought to follow in Religion, it seems to me that they would say no more than what is just and right. 'Tis true, *M. N's* Method does not speak altogether so plainly, but it aims that way. That Author, to make use of a Comparison which a great Writer furnishes me withal, is like a sort of people who never leave whetting a Knife, till they have worn it to nothing. They cannot be content to clean off the Rust that sticks to it, and restoring the blade to the natural Brightness that first adorn'd it. Let us keep the middle way, without bringing back the Abuses with which men at other times had loaded Religion: Let us leave it a Body, to the end it may prove a support to our Souls.

It may be seen by what I have said, of what Consequence it is, to oppose the Career of *M. N's* System, and more and more

*Hosier,
Eccles.
Pol.*

more to confirm and settle Christians in their persuasion, that the Books of the New Testament were inspir'd. This is that which I pretend to make out clearly in this Treatise, which I divide into two parts. First, I shall shew in General that the Sacred Books of the New Testament were inspir'd; and while I demonstrate what the nature of that Inspiration is, I shall produce Principles, whereby to resolve all difficulties that are already, or may be, rais'd upon this Subject.

We have but two sorts of Proofs to satisfy a Christian about matters which have no dependance upon the first Principles of Reason: the unanimous consent of those Doctors that liv'd in the Primitive times of the Church; and the Holy Scripture when it speaks after a plain and decisive manner. Those are the two sorts of Proofs which I shall make use of, to shew that the Sacred Books are inspir'd.

I begin with the Belief of the Primitive Church, after I have given the Reader two Admonitions; the one, that I do not undertake to drain all the Proofs that are to be found in this Fountain; it being my design to confine my self to what may bring the matter to a point of Demonstration, and to derive my Proofs from the first or most Primitive Ages of the Church.

The Holy Scriptures Inspired.

My second Advertisement is, that as *M. N.* assails the Body of the Sacred Books of the New Testament in gross, I am not bound to defend them otherwise than in the same manner. That Author believes, that they are no way inspir'd, that is to say, that the Holy Ghost was never concern'd in the Composition of them. For the repelling of this Attack, it is not requisite to follow the Sacred Books one after another, by shewing upon the Subject of every one of them, that they were effectually inspir'd. I shall therefore consider the several Sacred Books as one single Book; and I shall produce to the advantage of all together, all the Testimonies which I shall find favourable to any one in particular. 'Tis according to this Method that *M. N.* attacks them: for when he thought he had observ'd in any one of the Sacred Books any slip of human weakness, he infers from thence an Argument against all the rest. Let him in like manner be pleas'd to permit me to extend to all the Sacred Books whatever I shall meet with advantageous to any one, which ought to be allow'd me so much the rather, because there is not any one single, where there is not something to be met withal, which *M. N.* takes for a good Objection. If only one of the Sacred Books proves to be inspir'd, the Inspiration of that single Book secures the rest from
the

the Objections which are made against them.

Though I speak in this manner, 'tis not that I am in fear for any one Sacred Book of the New Testament: the whole is safe, if men will but take the pains to consider the Testimonies of the Primitive Church in favour of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books; they will not find any one, for which there is not the Testimony of the Ancients: or if any one be more remiss than the rest, that negligence will be repair'd by the General Proofs that relate to all the parts of the

*Inspiration of the
New Testa-
ment in the
manner after
I speak of it.*

Now the Christians speak of this day of the Holy Scripture of the New Testament. According to their Style 'tis call'd *The Scripture*, by way of Excellency; the Sacred Oracles, the Word of God; when the Preacher takes his Text, he says, as it is written in the word of God; and the People for that

xims as these, it is impossible but that the *Sectarians* must meet with great difficulties in the Scripture. But if they embrace *M. N's* Opinion, they will find a large Fountain of ready Answers; and in truth it may be said, that there are no Errors which may not be upheld by this new Method.

Though it should be said, that this new Method tends to annihilate the Use of the New Testament, and to bring men back to natural Reason, as the only Light which they ought to follow in Religion, it seems to me that they would say no more than what is just and right. 'Tis true, *M. N's* Method does not speak altogether so plainly, but it aims that way. That Author, to make use of a Comparison which a great Writer furnishes me withal, is like a sort of people who never leave whetting a Knife, till they have worn it to nothing. They cannot be content to clean off the Rust that sticks to it, and restoring the blade to the natural Brightness that first adorn'd it. Let us keep the middle way, without bringing back the Abuses with which men at other times had loaded Religion: Let us leave it a Body, to the end it may prove a support to our Souls.

*Hooker,
Ecclesi.
Pol.*

It may be seen by what I have said, of what Consequence it is, to oppose the Career of *M. N's* System, and more and more

more to confirm and settle Christians in their persuasion; that the Books of the New Testament were inspir'd. This is that which I pretend to make out clearly in this Treatise, which I divide into two parts. First, I shall shew in General that the Sacred Books of the New Testament were inspir'd; and while I demonstrate what the nature of that Inspiration is, I shall produce Principles, whereby to resolve all difficulties that are already, or may be, rais'd upon this Subject.

We have but two sorts of Proofs to satisfy a Christian about matters which have no dependance upon the first Principles of Reason: the unanimous consent of those Doctors that liv'd in the Primitive times of the Church; and the Holy Scripture when it speaks after a plain and decisive manner. Those are the two sorts of Proofs which I shall make use of, to shew that the Sacred Books are inspir'd.

I begin with the Belief of the Primitive Church, after I have given the Reader two Admonitions; the one, that I do not undertake to drain all the Proofs that are to be found in this Fountain; it being my design to confine my self to what may bring the matter to a point of Demonstration, and to derive my Proofs from the first or most Primitive Ages of the Church.

The Holy Scriptures Inspired.

My second Advertisement is, that as *M. N.* assails the Body of the Sacred Books of the New Testament in gross, I am not bound to defend them otherwise than in the same manner. That Author believes, that they are no way inspir'd, that is to say, that the Holy Ghost was never concern'd in the Composition of them. For the repelling of this Attack, it is not requisite to follow the Sacred Books one after another, by shewing upon the Subject of every one of them, that they were effectually inspir'd. I shall therefore consider the several Sacred Books as one single Book; and I shall produce to the advantage of all together, all the Testimonies which I shall find favourable to any one in particular. 'Tis according to this Method that *M. N.* attacks them: for when he thought he had observ'd in any one of the Sacred Books any slip of human weakness, he infers from thence an Argument against all the rest. Let him in like manner be pleas'd to permit me to extend to all the Sacred Books whatever I shall meet with advantageous to any one, which ought to be allow'd me so much the rather, because there is not any one single, where there is not something to be met withal, which *M. N.* takes for a good Objection. If only one of the Sacred Books proves to be inspir'd, the Inspiration of that single Book secures the rest from
the

the Objections which are made against them.

Though I speak in this manner, 'tis not that I am in fear for any one Sacred Book of the New Testament: the whole is safe, if men will but take the pains to consider the Testimonies of the Primitive Church in favour of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books; they will not find any one, for which there is not the Testimony of the Ancients: or if any one be more remiss than the rest, that negligence will be repair'd by the General Proofs that relate to all the parts of the New Testament.

CHAP. II.

The first Proof of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament, drawn from the manner after which the Ancients speak of it.

'TIS known how the Christians speak at this day of the Holy Scripture of the New Testament. According to their Style 'tis call'd *The Scripture*, by way of Excellency; the Sacred Oracles, the Word of God; when the Preacher takes his Text, he says, as it is written in the word of God; and the People for that

The Holy Scriptures Inspired

Reason believe themselves oblig'd to hearken with a devout Attention.

This Language no way agrees with *M. N's* System, who looks upon the Sacred Books as a work purely Human, and wherein there are faults which he would not pardon *Ezra*, or any other prophane Historian. Were I of this Author's Opinion, I should be dreadfully troubled to hear the Christians speak as they do of the Holy Scripture; I should cry out Blasphemy; I should never endure that they should say of the Voice of a mortal man, 'tis the Voice of God and not of man.

'Tis to be suspected that *M. N.* says to himself, that it is one of those pieces of Superstition which are so rooted in the minds of the People, that it is not safe to decry them. But let him think what he pleases, the language of the Christians is the same at this day, as it has been all along: in that particular there has been no variation. In the purest Ages they express themselves in reference to the Scripture as we do now. I defy the most Zealous Disciples of *M. N.* to deny it. They cannot do it without speaking against their Consciences; or without shewing that they are altogether strangers to Antiquity.

To justify this Proof which I draw from the Appellations that the Ancients gave the Scripture, I think my self bound

bound to make two Observations. The first is, that the Language cannot proceed from any superstitious Aggravation. It was in use in the very first times when Christians spoke according to the simplicity of their Hearts, and when they had no leisure to corrupt the Truth by Rhetorick or Superstition. In that same Age of Innocence, they call'd the Writings of the New Testament *the Oracles of Heaven, the Word of God, the Holy Scripture*. Nor can this language be accus'd to have sprung up from the Corruption of after Ages, when Superstition extended her Empire. I love to speak, as they spoke at a time when the Church was a Virgin; if I may be allow'd to make use of the words of an Ancient Author.

My second Observation is this; that the Ancients, when they thus expressed themselves, honoured the New Testament, as the New Testament had honoured the Ancient. I explain my self thus; when the Old Testament is cited by the Apostles, they usually call it the *Scripture*, without any addition; that is, the Scripture by way of Excellency; as when St. Paul, speaking of an Oracle dictated by the Mouth of God himself, says, *For what saith the Scripture, call Gal. 4. 30.*
out the Bondwomen and her Son. And in another place, *And the Scripture foreseeing Gal. 3. 8,*
that God would justify the Heathen through
faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abra-
ham,

ham, saying, *In thee shall all Nations be blessed.* I made choice of these two Passages on purpose, wherein St. Paul cites certain Oracles, that M. N. would not himself deny, but that it was God who spake them. The Apostle calls them *Scripture*. As he phrases it, *The Scripture saith thus, or God spake This*, comes all to one sense. This is so true, that having said to the Romans, *That God had concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all*: He speaks the same thing to the Gal. 3. 22. *Galatians* in these words, *But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, &c.* By which it appears that the *Voice of God*, and *Scripture* signifie the same thing.

Thus then I argue upon the whole. The Apostles when they cited the Oracles of the Old Testament, comprehended them all under the Name of *Scripture*, as if they would have said, the *Scripture of God*. Now I find that immediately after the Apostles, the Saints also quoted the Writings of the Apostles under the Name of *Scripture*: they have paid the same Honour to the Writings of the Apostles, as the Apostles did to the Old Testament. Have I not reason then to conclude from thence, that it was the judgment of the Saints of the Primitive Church, that the Writings of the Apostles were no less the *Scripture of God*, than the Prophetick Writings wherein are recorded the Oracles of God?

CH A P. III.

The second Proof, drawn from hence, that the Ancients have equal'd the Writings of the Apostles to the Oracles of the Old Testament.

IF what M. N. has asserted touching the writings of the Prophets were examined according to the Belief which the Primitive Church had of them, it would be soon acknowledg'd that this New System is not to be maintained by dint of Argument. The Proofs of which are every where to be found; For the Primitive Writers of the Christian Religion, being obliged to fetch from the Prophetic writings their Arguments to convince the *Jews*, or to confirm the Christians who acknowledged their Authority, this was the reason that they had frequent occasion to speak of the Inspiration of those Sacred Writings. So that we plainly see, that they are hardly ever cited by the Ancients without some Elogie drawn from the Sanctity of their Original. Sometimes 'tis the VVord of God, sometimes 'tis the Holy Scripture, sometimes the Oracles of the Holy Ghost, and sometimes the Scripture divinely inspired. VVhen the Primitive Christians quoted any passage of the Old Testament, it was as they phrased it the *Mouth of the Lord that spoke.*
But

But I do not speak this to divert me from al-
lodging some Proofs.

Clemens Romanus who, as 'tis well known
was contemporary with the Apostles, speak-
ing of the Prophets, says, *That the Ministers*
of the Grace of God, instigated by the Holy Spi-
rit, spoke of Repentance. A little after that
reciting a Maxim drawn from the Old Te-
stament, he assures us, that 'twas no more

Quod vaticinantes non
alio, quam verbo divino af-
flati agantur, vos quoque
ipsos discite reor. Dial.
cum Triph. Jud. p.8.

Descendens in eos Spiri-
tus Sanctus, Religionem ve-
ram discere volentes, per il-
los docendos esse statuit.
Id. ad Greg. Corint. p.32.

* *Ceterum Dei homines*
pleni spiritu Sancto, & a
Deo inspirati, institutisque
Propheta ordinati sunt;
proinde fuisse a Deo docti
Theophil. ad Antol. lib. 2.
p. 87.

than what the Holy Spirit
recommended to us. *Justin*
Martyr speaks of the Inspi-
ration of the Prophets, as of a
Truth common to the *Jews*
and *Christians*. And in a
nother place he says, that the
Holy Spirit descended upon
the Prophets, to the end
they might teach all those
that desired to be instructed
in the true Religion. * *Theo-*
philus of Antiochia, asserts
that the Prophets were men
filled with the Holy Spirit
and inspir'd by God. *Cle-*
mens of Alexandria is full of

the same thing. I shall cite no more than
one, which is to be found at the beginning
of his *Protreptic*. *Ipsa est Dominus loquens in*
Isaia, ipse in Elia, ipse in ora Prophetarum. All
the Primitive Authors honour the Prophets
and their Writings, as being inspir'd by
God. *Origen* alone would furnish me with
several passages; of which to be convinc'd,

thery

here needs no more than only to read his
hiloasia.

But to what purpose will some Body say,
o I quote all these Proofs? The dispute is
about the New Testament, not the Old one.
I will not say, that I had any desire of ma-
king it my Business to let the World know
the Character of M. N. by shewing that in
the judgement of the Ancients, he does an
infinite injury to the prophetic Writings, by
the liberty of writing which he assumes to
himself. That was never my Design; for
I confine my self exactly to my Subject. My
aim is still to make out, that the writings of
the New Testament are inspir'd by the Holy
Ghost. And is not this confirming the high
Opinion which the Ancients had of the Pro-
phets and their Writings, a keeping close to
that Design? If at the same time I show that
the Ancients have equal'd the Apostles and
their writings to the Prophets and their Pro-
phesies, without proceeding any farther, that
cannot be call'd a Deviation. For to be con-
vinc'd that it is a Truth, there needs no more
than to read the Passages which I have quo-
ted in the Margin, the number of which I
might have easily augmented; more especi-
ally would I have cited the Fathers who lived
after the Council of Nice.

phets, but all from one and the same God.

Commentarius Apostolorum & scriptis Prophetarum sequuntur.
9. ad. Fest. Mart. Quia unusq; Testamenti distincti. uno co-
domq; spiritu inspirati, locuti sunt. Theophil. ad. Aul. 1.30 p. 125.
Deus. E. crucis & Unigenitus & verbum incarnatum predication, &
4 Prophetis omnibus & Apostolis, & ab ipso spiritu. Iren. adv. He-
reticos. 2.3. c. 21. Unus enim & idem spiritus. Per que in prophe-
tis praconavit, &c. Ipse in Apostolis Annuntiavit. ib. c. 35. Chap.

*Iren. ad-
ver. heret.
lib. 3. c. 11.
Because
first the
Apostles,
secondly
the Pro-*

CHAP. IV.

The third Proof drawn from the Distinction which the Ancients made between the Canonical and Apocryphal Books.

THIS Distinction takes place in respect of both Testaments. There are join'd to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament several Pieces purely Human, as the Books of *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Barnes*, *Matthei's*, &c. which are call'd by the name of *Apocrypha*. A word, of which the true Original is very uncertain. But whether it signifie conceal'd or obscure, or whether it have any other sense, certain it is that those Books which are added to the Scripture, though they are not of divine Authority, are call'd *Apocrypha*.

If the Books which are added to the Old Testament are not admitted to be Canonical, 'tis not because they are defective in their matter. There are some of them whose Doctrine is sound, and their Instructions pure, so that there has been no scruple made to read them publickly in the Church. I dare presume to say there is such a Portion of Apocryphal Books which is more Instructive and more edifying, than such a portion of books we call Canonical. Wherefore then are they rejected as Apocryphal? I know

very

very well that several Marks of human Frailty are to be discover'd in them ; but the chief Ground of their being rejected is, because they are Books which the Holy Ghost has not inspir'd, the Finger of God appears not in them : the good things which are there to be found, flow not immediately from the Spring. Moreover we have reason to examine and suspect them, because they are not recommended to us by Persons actuated by the infallible Spirit of God.

This Reason is express'd by the Ancients in other terms : for they say, that the Apocryphal Books added to the Old Testament, want Canonical Authority, because they were written by persons who were no Prophets, and who lived after *Malachi*, the last of the Prophets. Wherein they followed *Josepbus*, who has deriv'd from thence the grand Character of the difference which we ought to make between the Canonical Books and the Apocryphal. The words of the Author are so remarkable as not to be omitted. *There can be nothing more certain, than the Writings authorized among us ; because they cannot be subject to any Contradiction ; in regard that there is nothing approv'd but what the Prophets wrote some Ages ago ; according to the purity of Truth, by the Inspiration and Agitation of the Spirit of God.*

Answer to
Appion.
L. 1. c. 2.

They have also written all that pass'd from the time of Artaxerxes to our Time. But by reason there has not been, as formerly, a successive Series of the Prophets, there is not the same Credit given to the Books which I have mention'd.

mentioned. The Books written after the Prophet Malachi have been constantly rejected, in regard he was the last Writer whom the Holy Ghost inspir'd, under the Old Testament.

Euseb. l. 8.
De monstr. Evangel.
Quod ab illo tempore servatum nullum ante Sacrum Volumen.

What I have said in respect of the Old Testament, takes place in relation to the New. Several Books of Piety were compos'd in the Primitive Church; the Authors were Persons of Worth, and the Books were so useful, that the Reading of them was not only recommended to private Persons, but they made no scruple to read them in publick. For example, the Epistle of Saint Clement had the same Honour. Wherefore was it that those Books were not put into the number of Canonical; that is to say, of those Books that are the constant Rule of our Faith and Manners? It was not always because they were in some things erroneous, but by reason they were not inspir'd by the Holy Ghost: that was sufficient to hinder them from being received for Canonical. The Question that was put, when there was a Dispute about any Book of which they doubted, was to know, whether or no it were written by a Person inspir'd. Thence it came to pass, that in the History of Eusebius we find that Dionysius Bishop of Alexandria, pronouncing his Sentence upon the Apocalypse, said, that he acknowledged it to be the work

work of some Holy Man inspir'd by the Spirit of God. 'Tis known also that Origen ^{Rever e-} speaking of the Book written by *Hermas*, ^{nim fan-} said, That he believ'd it to be a *Writing* ^{Si cujus-} divinely inspir'd; a certain proof that they ^{dam, &} believ'd those Books which the Church has ^{divino} admitted as Canonical, were inspir'd by the ^{spiritu} Holy Ghost: ^{afflari vi-} ^{ri id opus} ^{esse. Ba-}

Feb. h. e. l. 7. c. 21. *Quæ Scriptura valde mihi utilis videtur, Et ut puto, divinitus inspirata.* Origen. l. 10. *reptam* Epist. ad Rom. c. 16, Cor. 14.

CHAP. V.

The Fourth Proof drawn from the honour which the Ancients paid to the Sacred Books of the New Testament.

WE may draw a very strong Argument to prove that the Primitive Church believ'd that the Sacred Books of the New Testament were inspired, from the Honour and Reverence which they paid them. I shall begin with that Holy awe which kept the Ancients from attempting any alterations in the Sacred Writings. It was a piece of rashness and Sacrilege to adulterate them either by adding or diminishing. They were laden with *Anathemas* who were so bold as to lay their mending Hands upon those Sacred Writings.

VVe

Addenti aut detrabenti parna non modica. Iren. adv. Hæres. l. 3. c. 30.

*Quanta
perro au-
dacia sit
ejusmodi
facinus
ne ipsos
quidem*

*ignorare credibile est, aut enim sacras scripturas à spiritu san-
cto dictatas esse non credunt, ac proinde infideles sunt, aut se-
metipso spiritu sancto sapientiores esse existimant; ac proinde
quid aliud sunt quam Demoniaci: Euseb. h. e. l. 5. c. ult.*

*Euseb. l. 4.
29.*

We find in the Ecclesiastical History that the Heretics who denied the Divinity of our Lord; had the confidence to falsifie the Scripture, to accommodate the Text to their Opinions. Upon which an Author of the Primitive Ages says, that it was not likely that the Heretics were ignorant how criminal an Enterprize of that nature was; For, says he, either they believe not that the Sacred Scriptures were dictated by the Holy Ghost; and so are Infidels; or they imagine themselves to be wiser than the Holy Ghost, and then what are they other then Demoniacs.

They had an inviolable Veneration for the Sacred Scripture. *Tatianus*, for having only presumed to put the Epistles of *St. Paul* into more elegant Language, incurred the Censure, which may be seen in the Historian last cited. If the Church were so jealous of the words of the Scripture, we may easily judge of the Indignation of the Christians when they saw that any body durst presume to violate the Text it self, either by addition or diminution.

'Tis clear, that the Christians would never have been so sensible of injury done to the Scripture, if they had not believed it to be the work of the Holy Spirit. Some small fragment of Piety affixed to human Works would never have been a crime of Sacrilege. For
example,

example, I see not what great harm it could be, to sow to *S. Paul's* Epistle to *Philemon*, some little Discourse upon that Indulgence, which is due from Christian Masters to their Servants, were it true, that the Epistle to *Philemon* is a Peice, wherein the Holy Spirit had no Share. 'Tis true, there may be something said, in dislike of such an Act, in regard that Sincerity requires, that other Mens Works should be let alone in their natural Dress. Nevertheless the Miscarriage deserves not to be treated with the Penalties of Sacrilege: there is no reason to make such a noise about it, as the Primitive Christians did upon the Alterations that were made in the Writings of the New Testament.

Nothing more clearly shews the Opinion which the Ancients had of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books, than the Honor which they paid 'em in looking upon 'em as Sovereign Decrees in Matters of Religion. For which Reason it was, that in several Councils they were plac'd upon a Throne, as they would have seated Jesus Christ himself had he come visibly to preside in those Holy Assemblies. There was the same Honor paid to his Word, as they would have done to his Person. Which clearly shews with what an Eye of Veneration they look'd upon the Sacred Writings of the New Testament.

This Honor also no less visibly appears in the use which the Ancients made of Scripture to confirm the Faith of the Christians. The Doctors of the Primitive Church allow

The Holy Scriptures Inspired.

a Sovereign Rank to the New Testament. There is no longer any Hesitation, after the Voice of these Oracles has been once heard. These are the *Oracles* and *Testimonies* of the New Covenant; after they once had seen their Decision, it was a Crime to appeal.

When we seriously consider, that this is a Submission and Compliance in Religion it self, we ought to acknowledge, that this Honor was not paid to the Sacred Books, but because they were, or at least because they were thought to be the Books of God, who is the only Lord of the Conscience. And the Truth of this Reflection will be agreed to, whenever it shall be call'd to mind, that we speak of a time when the Christians perfectly understood this privilege of the Almighty. They were very nice in this particular. Wherefore did they not obey those Emperors that oppos'd the Course of Christianity? It was the Lord had spoken. Wherefore did they not believe so many Philosophers whose Example and Illusions so strongly supported Paganism? It was the Lord had said it. Wherefore did they forsake the Synagogue, that Synagogue which Divine Mercy had appointed to be the Guardian of the ancient Oracles? It was the Lord had spoken. The Scripture of the New Testament was more powerful than the Emperors, and triumph'd over the Reputation which the great Doctors had enjoy'd so long in all the Schools of the World. The Reason is, because that in comparison
of

of God, Man is nothing: when God speaks, no Body else is to be heard. Therefore the Christians being convinced that the Almighty spoke in the Writings of the New Testament, they yielded with an awful Submission to the Decisions which they found therein.

This was never contradicted by Hereticks; they durst not appeal from the Words of an Apostle, because they were persuaded, that they were the Words of the Holy Spirit. The Method which they usually made use of to avoid the Weight of that Authority was to mutilate the Scriptures, or to corrupt the Sense by wrested Explanations. But when it could be prov'd, that such a Writing was Apostolical, or that such a Sense was the meaning of the Apostle, the most obstinate Hereticks would submit, at least they had nothing to say. It is needless to cite Authors upon a Subject for which Proofs may be found almost in every Page of the Writings of the Primitive Church. Moreover there have been so many Occasions to shew, that she has always look'd upon the Scripture as the Rule of Faith, that these Proofs are become common. There needs no more for a Man to do, but cast his Eye upon our Books of Controversie, to see what have been the Opinions of the Fathers upon this Subject.

D 2**CHAP.**

C H A P. VI

*The Fifth Proof drawn from hence, that
the Ancients positively asserted the Books
of the New Testament to be inspir'd.*

THUS far I have prov'd the Inspiration of the Books of the New Testament, by Arguments drawn from Antiquity. 'Tis now high time to produce something more express and absolute. So I call the express Declarations of the Ancients upon this Subject. My Design, as I have already said, is to tie my self particularly to those who liv'd before the *Nicene* Council that is to say at a time which the greatest Enemies of Antiquity mention with some kind of Veneration. I am apt to think they will pardon me, if here I produce a Crowd of ancient Testimonies. 'Tis a Collection that may prove serviceable; for I believe there has not as yet been any made upon this Subject. Thereby it will be the better understood, that we teach nothing new concerning the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament; and that *M. N.* has no reason to insinuate from time to time, that the Ancients are of his side. If he be willing that the Question shall be decided by Antiquity, that which I am going to say, tho I only pick and chuse, would quickly shew where the Innovation lies.

Clemens

Clement Romanus is very express in the Epistle which he wrote to the *Corinthians*; for he affirms, that *S. Paul*, writing to the same Church, concerning the Schisms that rent it to pieces, was divinely inspir'd.

Clem. 1. Ep. ad Cor. Certe divinitus inspiratus, de se, de Cepha, & Apostolo per Epistolam vos monuit. According to *Furnius's* Version.

Justin Martyr, is no less express in his Conference with *Trypho* the Jew, where he says, that he would undertake to prove, that the Christians did not build their Faith upon Fables, nor upon vain Arguments, but upon Demonstrations full of the Holy Ghost.

Assistenti namque tibi, & auscultanti probabo, non vana nos fidem habuisse fabula, neque Demonstrationum exparibus, sed Spiritu Divino pleni. *Just. Mart.* in Dial. cum Tryph. p. 226.

Theophilus, Bishop of *Antiochia*, citing the Authors of the Old and New Testament, says, that both the one and the other spoke, as being inspir'd with one and the same Spirit. Who is that Spirit? To which he answers a little after, That it was the Spirit of God, *Divino Spiritu afflati*.

Theoph. ad Antol. l. 3. p. 125. Quia utriusque Testamenti Ministri, uno eodemque spiritu inspirati, locuti sunt. Quapropter hoc spiritu impulsus consonus, & nullo modo pugnantia prädixere. Ibid. p. 128.

The Testimony of *Irenæus* is very positive in one place where he goes about to prove, that we ought not to dispute against the Decisions of the Holy Scripture. Wherefore? Because it is the Word of God, and of his Spirit.

Iren. l. 2. p. 47. Credere autem hæc talia debemus Deo qui & nos facit; rectissime scientes, quia Scriptura perfecta sunt, quippe à verbo Dei & Spiritu ejus dicta.

For thus we explain what the same Author says

Ibid. l. 3. c. 21. *Verbum incarnatum pradiatum & a Prophetis & Apostolis, & ab ipso Spiritu.*

in another Place of the Word which was preach'd by the Spirit. The Word made Flesh, says he, which was preach'd by the Prophets, by the Apo-

stles, and by the Spirit: as if he had said, by the Spirit which inspired both the one and the other. This is the Explanation of Irenaeus

Unus enim & idem Spiritus Dei, qui in Prophetis quidem praeconavit, &c. & in Apostolis annuntiavit. Id. l. 3. 25.

himself: for he says in another place, That the Spirit of God that spoke by the Prophets, Preach'd the Gospel also by the Apostles.

Omnis Scriptura nobis data, consonans nobis imponitur. Id. p. 203.

In a Word, 'tis the steadfast Doctrine of that ancient Author, that the whole Scripture proceeded from God.

Clement of Alexandria is of the same Opinion when he speaks in his *Stromata* of the equivocal Words which we meet with in Scripture. The Spirit of God, says he, spoke *occultly* to the Prophets and Apostles, and those Holy Men were the Dis-

ciples of the Spirit. In another place, the

Qui divinis erga credidit Scripturis, firmum habens iudicium, cui contradicere nequit, demonstrationem, & qui Scripturas deus vocem accipit. Id. l. 2. p. 362.

same Author assures us, that the Authority of the Scripture distinctly and clearly makes out the Holy Spirit; and that they who have that Authority have a Demonstration from the Spirit that

the Scriptures proceed from an Omnipotent Authority; and that it was meant of the whole Scripture of the Christians, what the Psalmist speaks, when he said, *My people hear my Law.* *Psalm. 119. 105.* *Et audire Populus meus Legem meam.* *Psalm. 119. 105.*

In this sense Tertullian calls the Scriptures the Voice of God; by which it may be seen what Opinion that Author had of the Scripture. He attributes it in several other Passages, to the Spirit of God. I shall chuse out some of 'em. In his Treatise of Prescriptions, he cites the Words where S. Paul admonishes the Colossians not to suffer themselves to be seduced by Human Traditions, and adds this Expression, *Præter Providentiam Spiritus Sancti*; visibly intimating thereby, that it was the Holy Ghost who had set down the Measures of our Faith in the Scriptures. It is more express in other parts, discoursing against *Hermogenes*; It was, the Holy Spirit, says he, that methodiz'd the Scripture in that Form as we now behold it: That the Holy Spirit took care of our Instruction in the Holy Scripture — and after that glorifies the Author of that Sacred Book with an Expression, that would be profane, were it made use of in Applause of any other Book. I add, says he, the Falsity of the Scriptures.

Adversus Adversum Spiritus Sancti. Quæ hæc Scriptura sunt rationem constituit. Si tantam curam instructionis nostræ resumpsit Spiritus Sanctus — Adversus Scripturam plenitudinem. Tertullianus. c. 32.

Thus it is, that we find *Tertullian* speaking of the Scripture in general, tho' the Subject of his Discourse was only *Genesis*, where he treats of the Creation of the Matter, the Eternity of which *Hermogenes* asserted. But here is something yet more positive. If you ask *Tertullian* who it is that speaks in the first

Et ideo Majestas Spiritus Sancti perspicax quomodocumque sensuum, & in ipsa ad Thessalonicenses Epistola suggerit. De Resur. Carnis c. 14.

Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, he will answer, 'Tis the Majesty of the Holy Ghost. When the same Author discourses of the Rules that *S. Paul* gives the Bishops, after what manner to carry themselves, The Holy Ghost, says he, foresaw, that some would say, That it was lawful for the Bishops to do what they pleas'd. By which it appears, that *Tertullian* be-

Prospiciebat Spiritus Sanctus, dicturus quosdam omnia licent Episcopis. Tert. de Monog. c. 12.

liey'd those Rules to be deriv'd from the Holy Spirit, who deem'd 'em to be necessary.

Origen has explain'd himself in so many Places, upon the Inspiration of the whole Scripture, that I should have contented myself with only naming him, if *M. N.* had not borrow'd the Authority of that ancient Doctor, in saying, That he did not acknowledge

Sens. p. 262. The Author applies to *Origen* what he had said of *S. Jerome*.

a continued Inspiration, by the Impulse of which the Apostles were constantly and steadfastly mov'd to write what they

wrote. But I need no more to shew the true Sentiments of *Origen*, than to make choice of some parts of the *Philocalia*, which is a Peice that *S. Basil* and *S. Gregory Nazianzen*

Nations compos'd out of Passages which they took out of Origen. He says, That the Christians were convinced, that the Sacred Books were not Human Commentaries, but that they were inspir'd by the Holy Spirit. He had also said a little before, that he had prov'd that the Scriptures were divinely inspired.

Persuasionem habens sacros libras, non dominum esse Commentarios, sed ex Sancti Spiritus afflatu, voluntate Dei, per Jesum Christum, Patris universorum descriptas. Philoc. c. 1. ex lib. 4. De principiis. *Postquam in discursu, divinitus inspiratus esse Scripturas Sacras probavimus* Idem, ibid.

In the same Chapter we find, that Origen affirms, that the Prophets and Apostles were illuminated by the same Spirit while they compos'd the Scriptures.

Ac principis demonstrandum est Spiritu Divine Providentiæ per verbum quod in principio erat apud Deum, Ministros veritatis,

Prophetas & Apostolos illuminantes, &c. Id. p. 11.

Nor has Origen only explain'd himself upon the Inspiration of the Sacred Books in general, but he takes 'em separately, and has explain'd himself so clearly, that it is not to be conceiv'd how

Unius & ejusdem Dei Spiritus idem in Evangeliiis & Apostolorum scriptis fecit. Id. ib. p. 12.

M. N. could cite, in favour of his Opinion, an Author which has condemn'd it in express Terms. In the Chapter already quoted, he shews, that the Obscurity of some Words which are to be found in Scripture, no way prejudices the Divinity of it. To that purpose he makes use of a Comparison drawn from Providence, of which there is no manner of Question made, tho there be several Occasions wherein the Conduct

The Holy Scriptures Inspired.

Conduct of it may seem to be obscure. So
 peculiar is any thing abstracted from the Divi-
 nity of the Scripture diffus'd through every part
 of it, because that in every particular word our
 Imagination cannot reach the hidden Splendor of
 the Doctrine that lies latent, in an ordinary and
 seemingly contemptible Phrase, for we have that
Transire in Baribara Vesseli, re the end the Ex-
cellence and Excellency of the Power of God
might shine forth. Origen expressed himself
 so vehemently, that he declares, that the
 smallest Letter of the Scripture was placed
 there by the Divine Wisdom, and that for
 that Reason it was perhaps that our Lord
 and Saviour said, that the least *iota* of it
 should not pass away. *Exquisitissima cura &*
studio Spiritus Sanctum per Ministros Verbi illa
Subjecit, ne unquam nos latere posset ratio secun-
dum quam Divina Sapiencia omnem Scripturam
Divinitus datam, vel ad usque unam Literulam
attigit; & propterea forsitan servator, Iota, in-
quit, unum, vel Apex unum, &c. After this,
 Origen shows, that as the Care of God ap-
 pear'd in the smallest Insects, and the Seeds
 of the smallest Plants, in like manner we
 ought to believe, that the Holy Ghost has dis-
 pers'd the Traces of his Wisdom in every
 Letter of the Scripture. I do not believe
 that M. N. could have cited an Author less
 favourable to his Opinion. Every Body
 knows that Origen would have a Mystery
 conceal'd in every part of Scripture, pre-
 tending, that God had infus'd something
 considerable into every Letter of the Scri-
 pture,

pture. *Quod sacra Litera* Ita nos censemus de om-
 ne unum quidem Apicem ha-
 beant vacuum sapientia Dei. *Scriptis, tanquam illa quæ*
 Origen in Jerem. *sapientiam humana supe-*
riorem tradit. Magna Pro-
videntia per divinas Li-
teras hominum generi salutaria Documenta inservire, & ut ita
dicam Literis, quæ ad unamquamque potest capere, vestigia sa-
pientia impressas. Id. lib. vii. Tom. I. in Jerem.

I have cited a sufficient Number of Au-
 thors of the three first Ages, to prove, that at
 that very time the Christians were convinced,
 as at this day, that the Sacred Books of
 both Testaments were inspir'd by the Holy
 Ghost. Therefore I thought it needless to
 extend the Chain of my Citations any far-
 ther; because no Body can deny, but af-
 ter the Nicene Council (when they had
 more Occasion to explain themselves upon
 this Subject) the universal Voice of the
 Church was for the Inspiration of the New
 Testament.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

*Wherein the Objections that may be brought
against the Testimony of Antiquity are
answered.*

*Senti-
ments,
Lect. 12.
p. 262.*

M. N. does not so far despise Antiquity, but that he makes use of it when he believes it never so little favourable to him. He omits nothing that may give an advantageous Air to his Opinion. Had he found in his way any lucky Fragment to his purpose, he would not have failed to have made the best of it. I remember what he says in one place; *Thus you see that the most able and subtle Interpreters of Scripture which Christian Antiquity produced, have been of the same Opinion as my self: that is to say, as it is apparent by some Lines before, that they did not acknowledge any Inspiration that continually and stedfastly impuls'd the Apostles to write what they wrote.* It might be thought that this Conclusion was the product of a croud of Citations; after which there was no question to be made but that the Ancients were of M. N's Opinion. But it was no small wonder to us, that the beginning of the Conclusion should be reduc'd to these two or three words; *It behoves us to joyn with St. Jerome, Origen, from whom he had drawn this Opinion touching the Dispensation which he*
attributes

attributes to these two Apostles, and several other Greek Fathers. Should I say, that neither St. Jerome, nor Origen, nor any of the other Greek Fathers ever contradicted the Inspiration of the Apostles, such as we affirm it to be, permanent and constant, *M. N.* has an answer ready, and will tell us, that he did not cite those Ancients, but to shew, how they believed that St. Peter and St. Paul made use of Dispensation at what time Saint Paul contradicted St. Peter. Certain it is that no other use can be made of that Quotation; but it is placed so cunningly after these words, *It appears from thence that they did not acknowledge a continual Inspiration, &c.* That it is easie to be perceived that the Author had a desire to dazzle those people who have any respect for Antiquity, but who are not acquainted with it but at a distance.

However, it is to be seen by the Passages which I have cited out of Origen, that he is positive in the Point of Inspiration of the Sacred Books. Nor does St. Jerome speak less expressly; neither shall I consult any other Part but that which *M. N.* has marked out for me; See, says he, *the Preface of St. Jerome to his Comment upon the Epistle to Philemon.* Would not any Man who read that Reference believe, that it would be infallibly found in that Preface, that St. Jerome proves by the little Things which are to be met with in Scripture, that he did not believe the Holy Ghost concern'd in the Composition of all the Sacred Books. I have read the
Preface

Preface very seriously, and I am confident that *M. N.* has read it also; for the Persons which he there mentions, spoke much after the rate as he does. Wherefore then had he not so much sincerity as to acknowledge, that the Objection drawn from the Minute things in Scripture (give the leave to make use of the expression) is like the rest in the mouths of those Adversaries which St. *Jerome* undertakes to refute. He declares at first that he speaks of those who refused to admit the Epistle of St. *Paul* to *Philemon*, and who said exactly the same thing as *M. N.* and *Spinosa* say, *Nam semper Apostolum, nec omnia, Christus in se loquente, disjicit.* They alledged what St. *Paul* says of the Cloak which he left at *Thras*; that the Prophets were wont expressly to tell the people when they spoke in the Name of the Lord, because they were not always Prophets. These are exactly *M. N.*'s scruples. But St. *Jerome* supports them no manner of way; quite the contrary, he declares that they are in the wrong for not admitting the Epistle to *Philemon*, under pretence that it contains several things of little moment, and makes use of a Comparison which *Origen* has made use of upon the same Subject. If, says he, they have a mind to deny that the great and the little Things come from one and the same hand, then let them admit two Creators; one Creator of the Insects, and another of Heaven and Earth. Is this any satisfaction for a Man that would favour the Opinion of *M. N.*

It seems by the Preface of St. Jerome upon *Philomon*, that from that very time, there have been anonymous Persons who thought as *M. N.* does. I will also grant him that we find in *Epiphanius*, that the *Anonians* explained themselves much after the same manner. *Actius* corrupted them sufficiently, to which the persuading them to defame the Prophets and Apostles. Did any man cite the Prophets? These Sectaries cried out, VVhat d'ye tell us of the Old Testament? Did ye press hard upon them any Argument taken from any of the Apostles. The Apostle, say they in that part spoke like a Man.

Heref.

76.

the *Ano-*
main.

Quid en
imbi vo-
rus Testa-
mentum
obicit?

Iste inquit, Apostolus tanquam Homo dixit.

Were I not precisely confin'd to the three first Ages, I could shew how *Epiphanius* maintain'd the Honour and Inspiration of the Apostolical Writings. For there is not any one of the Fathers from whence there might be drawn more express Passages for the Belief which I defend. However it behoves me to quote some few, to shew that I do not talk at Random, disputing against the *Alogians* who rejected the *Apocalyp*, he takes an occasion to let forth the true original of the four *Evangelis*, which he pretends to be divinely inspir'd. He says, that *Mark* full of the Holy Ghost, receiv'd a Commission to write his Gospel.

Epiph.

Heref. 51.

Marcus
spiritu
santo

completus, conscribendi Evangelii munus accepit.

That

That *Luke* was excited and constrain'd by the secret impulses and instigations of the Holy Ghost.

Am B.

Lucam oculis quibusdam stimulus cogit & excitat.

§.6. *Spiritus Sanctus Joannem invitum licet ad scribendum Evangelium impulsit, §.9. Quæ cum Apostolus ex sancti spiritus afflatu promunciat, necesse non habuit spiritus sancti mentionem facere. Cum igitur Apostolus, vel potius spiritus sanctus per Apostolum loqueretur. ibid. quippe Apostolus sancto spiritu impulsus. ibid. de quibus adeo mihi videtur in Epistola Jude commorari spiritus, hoc est in Catholica ejus Epistola — in qua per Apostoli vocem sanctus, inquam, spiritus & Hæres. 26. which is the Gnostic. Sect. 1:.*

That the Holy Ghost enforced *St. John* to write his Gospel against his will. That *St. John* has related all things faithfully under the Conduct of the Holy Ghost, *Spiritu sancto Gubernans* (an expression that ought to be born in mind, for the better understanding of the nature of the Inspiration of the sacred Writings) that the Holy Ghost spoke by *Saint Paul*. That the Holy Ghost spoke by the mouth of *Saint Jude* in his General Epistle. Thus it is, that the Fathers generally express themselves after the *Nicene Council*.

But I have laid an Injunction upon my self not to descend too low: and I have only spoken of *Epiphanius*, by reason of *Aetius* who profess the same Opinion with *M. N.*

Nor do I find that that same *Arian* was able, any more than his Disciples to interrupt the Series of Tradition, or to hinder the common Belief of the Universal Church from being altogether for the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament. As for *Saint*

Jerome

Jerom's anonymous Persons, and *Epiphanius's* *Adversarij*, they make not a part of the Church considerable enough, for any man whatever to produce them as Testimonies. But in regard it has been all along my aim to confine my self to the three first Ages of the Church, I shall say no more than this, that 'tis apparent that these Innovators who appear'd not till the Ages following, cannot hinder me from concluding, that I have on my side the Universal testimony of the Church truly Primitive.

This Testimony is of great moment in the Minds of all men that consider those Ages to be the most pure, at what time they had things deliver'd to them as it were from the first hand. I know not what I ought to think of a Christian who despises such Antiquity. Such a Scorn may be excus'd in people who are ignorant of it, but when we find the learned neglecting a Testimony so authentick, 'tis a temptation to believe that either they have not well considered the influences which that Testimony has upon the Foundations of the Christian Religion, or that else they would not be sorry to see that Foundation shaken.

It may be said that the Fathers which we so highly extol, were guilty of divers Errors. I grant it; 'twas by the permission of God, that by that means the Writings which he has solely abandon'd to human Wildom, should be distinguish'd from those which he infallibly directed by his Spirit. But we ought to know what those Errors are, before

we draw an argument against what the Fathers have said for the Inspiration of the Sacred Books. First I observe that those Errors are not universal among the Fathers: now that wherein they contradict themselves can never be said to be the unanimous Voice of Antiquity. This is the Character of the Errors with which the first Authors of Christianity were upbraided. Some deviated after one manner, others after another: but they were not found in company under the same deviation. Such Errors have nothing common with the truths which they teach both constantly and without variation, of which nature is the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament.

I add to this consideration, that it is requisite to examine well the nature of the Errors of which the Fathers are accus'd, before an argument be rais'd from thence against their unanimous Testimonies for the inspiration of the Scripture. Sometimes they mistake in speaking of something to come which never was revealed to them; as when they discourse with too much confidence, how near at hand the end of the World is. Sometimes they err in matters of Fact which they have admitted with too much Credulity, as when they tell the Story of a Phoenix rising again out of her ashes. But nothing of all this does any injury to what they have averr'd touching the inspiration of the Sacred Books. That is a Truth that marches step by step with the delivery it self of those Books. They were deliver'd from hand to hand with this

this Advertisement, that they were inspir'd by the Holy Ghost. It is as certain, that the Holy Ghost directed and order'd the Composition and structure of the Gospels, as that the Gospels were written by St. *Matthæw*, Saint *Mark*, Saint *Luke*, and Saint *John*. This is one of those things that were essential to the Honour of the Sacred Books; and which were every day said of them. So that 'twas impossible that this Tradition so lively and universal as it was, should come from any other hand than the Apostles themselves, who when they left their works behind them, acknowledged they had been written by the enlivening inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This has no resemblance in the least with the story of a Phoenix, nor with what the Fathers imagin'd about the end of the World, while they crossly interpreted the words of the Apostles.

There is not any more plausible Objection than that which may be drawn from the judgment of the Fathers upon the Version of the *Septuagint*. *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, and *Clement of Alexandria*, were of Opinion that those Interpreters were guided by the Spirit of God. However at this day, many people believe that they were subject to Error, like the rest of the Interpreters, and by consequence left to themselves. Upon which some may raise this argument: Since the Fathers were deceived in their Opinion touching the inspiration of the *Greek* Interpreters of the Old Testament, the testimony which those Fathers give in relation to the

The Holy Scriptures Inspired.

Apostolic Writings ought not to be so strongly urged: 'tis from thence to be seen that 'tis not an infallible Testimony. I have several things to observe, by way of solid answer to this Objection.

I. There are learned Men of the first Rank, who indeed maintain that the *Seventy Interpreters* were really guided by the Holy Spirit. It cannot be deny'd, but that it was by a special direction of Providence, that the Sacred Books were translated into a Language that was almost Universal. It was proper, that at a time when God would not be known but in a small corner of the World, the Sacred Books should be in *Hebrew*. But when Grace was ready to disperse them over the Earth, was it not convenient that the Books where God had revealed himself, should be put into the most universal Language? That Translation prepar'd the way for the *Messiah*: and the Apostles had the advantage of quoting a Version which the VWorld had admir'd for a long time. This so well agrees with Gods design of calling all People to the knowledge of himself; that it cannot be deny'd, but that by his Providence he manag'd the opportunities which produc'd the Version of the *Septuagint*.

No body can deny what I have said; but several there are who go a great way farther, and maintain, that the *Greek Interpreters*, were effectually inspired. To prove this, they quote divers Authors. They pretend that S. *Jerome* was the first, who adventured to contradict that Tradition. After they

they had cited the Christians to support their Tenent, they search for it in *Philo* the Jew, who speaks of the Version of the *Septuagint* as of an inspired Piece. 'Tis well known that *Josephus's* Opinion was not so much in favour of it. For he says no more, than that it

De vita Moysi. l. 2. sub fin. Tanquam numine correpti prophetabant, non alia aliis, sed omnes ad verbum eadem quasi quopiam distant singulis invisibiliter. * *Joseph. Antiq. l. 12. c. 2.*

was a very exact Translation, though it were compleated within the space of seventy two days according to the number of the Interpreters. 'Tis said, that we ought not to draw any argument from that indifferency wherewith *Josephus* expresses himself upon the Version of the *Septuagint*, because the Custom of that Author is to turn aside, when he relates the Miracles believ'd by the Jews. They who are willing to justify him say, that his aim was to win himself a greater Reputation amongst the Romans for whom he wrote, and that he does not nakedly relate those Miracles which are the best confirm'd, for fear of disobliging Foreigners by the rehearsal of actions seemingly Romanick. 'Tis for that reason 'tis believed he did not speak all he thought of the Version of the *Seventy*: but that he insinuates it sufficiently, when he writes that the High Priest, the Interpreters and the Magistrates of the Jews desired that it might no longer be lawful to change the least Tittle in that Version. If it be true that the Greek Interpreters were particularly guided by the Holy Ghost, as several learned Men assert; 'tis

evident, that the Objection has no foundation. I add to this that the Apostles, while they most commonly made use of the Version of the 70 Interpreters have in some measure rendred them Canonical, and that it is become a work of the Holy Ghost, at least by way of approbation; which in some measure justifies what the Ancients have said of it.

2. I grant that the Fathers who believed the inspiration of the Interpreters were deceiv'd. But that Tradition not being to be compar'd in extent to that which I have alledged in favour of the inspiration of the Apostolic Writings, there is no consequence to be inferr'd from the one against the other: For the one, they own they only cite some of the Ancients contradicted by Saint *Jerome* whereas I have produced the unanimous Testimony of Antiquity.

3. Let them but a little examine the nature of the matter in Question. The act of Inspiration of the *Greek* Interpreters was an Act that happen'd, as they pretend, about three hundred Years before the Birth of Christ, and which was convey'd through the Channel of a *Pagan* and some *Jews*, so that it was no such impossible thing but that the Primitive Fathers of the Church, over credulous in reference to that Version for which they had an esteem, should be deceiv'd in honouring it with a Celestial Original. But the inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament, is quite

quite of another nature: That was a matter of Fact, which the Ancients took, as I may so say from the Lips of the Apostles, and which was perpetuated by a Tradition repeated every day, and that too among Christians remote one from the other. Since then there is so great a difference between these two matters of Fact, 'tis evidently apparent, that though all the Fathers were in an Error when they spoke of the inspiration of the *Greek* Interpreters, it cannot be thence concluded that they were mistaken in the infallible Inspiration which they ascribe to the Apostolic Writings.

By searching into the Objections against the Truth which I have proved; I imagin'd with my self, that one might object an ancient Custom of the Church to honour the Gospels, by causing the People to hear them read standing, whereas every body might sit down at the reading of the Epistles. Does not this signify, will some body say, that the Gospels being full of things that issue immediately from the Lips of our Saviour, it was acknowledged by that reverend Posture, that they were look'd upon as infallible Oracles; but that there was not the same Veneration paid the Epistles, in regard they were deemed to be Pieces purely Human? However this Objection brings little advantage to M. N's Opinion, who denies the Gospels to be any more inspir'd than the Epistles. He believes the *Evangelists* attest'd the Truth no otherwise than ordinary Historians, and that the Apostles wrote their

Epistles no otherwise than like more Doctors, who utter what comes into their Fancies, in matters of Religion. According to this Idea, the Historian is no more considered than the Doctor; so that the Objection will not serve *M. N.*'s turn. But if any other would make a Benefit of it, he ought to know that the Custom which he lays hold of, is neither so ancient, nor so universal as may be imagin'd. Though, were it as ancient as the Apostles, or as universal as the Church, which it is not, there is no conclusion to be drawn from thence, that the Epistles are the works of Men. And to be convinced of this, there needs no more, than to call to mind, that the Custom in Dispute, was taken from the Synagogue, where the Law and the Prophets were heard with distinguishing Marks of Veneration; not that they believed the Prophets were not inspir'd, but they look'd upon the Prophets as only infallible Commentators upon the Law, and thought that they were to pay a greater Honour to the Text than to the Commentary, to *Moses* than the Prophets. A Custom which afterwards slid I know not how from thence into the Christian Church. By which they have in some measure advanced the Gospels into the place of the Law, and the Apostles into the room of the Prophets; not that the Apostles were thought to be less inspir'd than the *Evangelists*, but only to give the advantage of Honour to the Gospel; whether it were because the Gospels, as I said before, contain those things that issued im-

medi-

mediately from the Lips of our Saviour Jesus Christ; or whether it were, as Cardinal Bona said, to shew that we are or ought to be always ready to obey the Precepts that God has commanded us in his Gospel. This is no Obstruction however, why the Church might not be convinc'd, that the Holy Ghost presided in the

Tantum servi ante dominum, se promptos esse & paratos ostendunt ad exequenda mandata Dei que in Evangelio promulgantur: Bon. de reb. lit. L. 2. c. 7. Sect. 3.

Composition of the Epistles also. Which is apparently manifest from this, that the same Fathers and Ancients who practis'd the Custom before mention'd, unanimously affirm that the Apostolic Writings are Inspir'd.

And now I suppose I have produced all that is of greatest force against the Testimony which Antiquity gives on the behalf of Inspiration: so that having answered all Objections, I may justly presume to conclude, that this Attestation being unanimous, is a solid Proof for a Christian who understands what the weight of the Attestation of that part of Antiquity is.

CHAP.

C H A P. VIII.

Wherein we begin to prove by the Books of the New Testament, that they are inspir'd, and particularly by the Intention which God had in giving them to the World.

I Am entring into a sort of Proof that more directly opposes the System of M. N. He pretends, that in the Writings of the New Testament, there is no Proof of their Inspiration. We are going to shew the contrary in the Choice which I have made of those Proofs. They are of two sorts; General and Particular: The General are Six in Number; the Design of God in his Writings; the Manner of their Composition; the Nature of the Covenant, of which they are the Writings; the Privilege of their Authors; the Promise of Jesus Christ; and the fulfilling of that Promise.

Now to know by the Writings it self of the New Testament, that it was inspir'd, there needs no more than to consider the Purpose of God in granting it to Men. If his Aim be such as is not to be attain'd without inspiring the Interpreters of his Will, 'tis clear that they were not wrote without the assistance of his Inspiration.

Should

Should I but go about to make a small Incurſion into Antiquity, I might from thence produce ſeveral Teſtimonies which aſſure me, that the Deſign of the Almighty, in the Writings of the New Teſtament, was to ſupply the Abſence of the Apoſtles, and to lay us down a Rule, which might be, according to the Expreſſion of *Irenæus*, the Foundation and Pillar of our Faith. This is that which is prov'd by the expreſs Declaration of the ancient Doctors, and by the conſtant Uſe which they have made of the Scripture. But I have ſaid enough upon this Subject already; and therefore it is my purpoſe now to fetch my Proofs from the Bottom of that Divine Scripture.

I certainly perceive two Deſigns of the Almighty; the one is a particular Deſign with regard to certain perſons, at a certain time: the other has a Proſpect, in relation to all Men and all Times. The Traces of theſe two Deſigns appear in all the parts of Scripture. The Commencement and Birth of the Gospels and Epistles was for the moſt part occaſional; if I may be permitted to uſe the Expreſſion: *S. Luke* declares, that the Number of Gospels which ran about was the Occaſion of his. 'Tis alſo pretended, that the Hereſie that began to ſhew it ſelf in *S. John's* time, oblig'd him to compile his Gospel, as a Rampart, to fortifie the Faith of the Chriſtians. The Occaſions which produced the moſt part of the other Writings of the New Teſtament, are ſpecified diſtinctly enough; or if there be any,
of

of which we know not the Occasion of their Writing, it is not thence to be concluded, that there was no occasion given for their being written in the Age wherein they were set forth; but Providence has permitted an Eclipse of that Knowledge, which is deem'd not necessary for our Salvation. We may see that there is hardly any part of the New Testament, that has not some particular and peculiar Occasion.

'Tis of no advantage to my Subject, to examine whether the Apostolick Writings had any need of being inspir'd to fulfill the particular Purposes of the Almighty. I shall only say, that the Inspiration of the Scriptures was nothing near so necessary in the Primitive Times, as it is at this day. When they for whose sake the Scripture was first compil'd found not wherewithal therein to satisfy themselves, they needed no more than to ask the Apostles, and to enjoy all the Advantages which the first Age afforded for their Instruction. But now that we have nothing more than the Scripture, there is an absolute necessity, since it is the Pleasure of God to instruct us solidly, that it should be inspir'd.

I do not believe there is at this day any Christian Society, which is not convinc'd, that besides the particular Occasions that have given Birth to the Scripture, God was also willing, in composing it, to take care of after Ages. The Christian Religion is a Gracious Favour which God causes to glide along from one Age to another, for the Happiness
of

of Mankind. It will last as long as the World endures: Men will declare and publish the Death of our Lord and Saviour, till he appears again in person. The Promise belongs to us and all those that shall come after us, *as many as the Lord shall call to himself.* No Christian makes any question, but that the Christian Religion will be the Observance of all Ages: otherwise why should he call himself a Christian?

Having thus proved the Continuance of our Sacred Religion, would we know how God preserves it, we see no other means by which he does it, than by the Scripture, which after it had serv'd for the Use of the First Age, gives Light to us in our Turn, as it will enlighten our Posterity.

M. N. acknowledges, that indeed the Scripture is the means of the Propagation of our Faith, but he believes, that for that purpose it is enough, that the Sacred Authors have made a faithful Report of what they learn'd from our Lord, tho their Additions and their Commentaries are absolutely the Growth of their own Heads. However, if Men would but consider, they will find that God would but have badly put in execution the Design which he has laid of establishing a solid Faith, had he follow'd the System which I oppose.

You tell us, that the Sacred Writers have faithfully reported what they learn'd from our Lord and Saviour. This is certain, if you affirm that the Holy Ghost guided their Pens.

Pens. But if you believe, that they wrote of their own Heads, you destroy their Credit. That they were honest and sincere, I agree; but such persons may be deceiv'd. I cannot rely upon 'em, unless I believe that the Holy Ghost was their Guide in every Truth. I see in their Sacred Writings several Arguments, and a great number of Applications of the Old Testament. If I believe that the Holy Ghost was their Instructor, I willingly submit to 'em, but without such an assistance, I cannot repose upon Commentators, who, setting aside the Succour of the Holy Ghost, were less learned, and of less Abilities than many Doctors at this day. Moreover, had the Apostles always distinguish'd what they knew by Revelation, from what they spoke of their own Heads, there would be less difficulty in the thing: but they present us almost all the whole Bulk in a Mixture, where it is a hard matter to discern what is Divine from what is not. My Conscience cannot be satisfied with this Method; I am always in doubt whether I ought to argue after the Apostles, or whether I ought to appeal from their Decisions to my own Reason. I can never be able to stop the Progress of Error, if after I have found a Passage which utterly and clearly destroys it, it shall be reply'd upon me, this comes from the Apostle, not from God; and thus there will be never any thing of Certainty. But most assuredly God has not made Choice of a Means that authorises our Doubts, for a Rule of our Faith.

Faith. Of Necessity therefore all the Parts of Scripture must be divinely inspir'd, to the end the Scripture may render the *Mans of God* accomplish'd in all good Works.

CHAP. IX.

Wherein the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament is demonstrated by the manner of their Composition.

IT is a difficult Thing to conceive, that the Sacred Books of the New Testament should be inspir'd by the Holy Ghost, and yet that there should appear no Footsteps in it of that Inspiration; and this is that which I design to examine. I do not pretend, by any means, to prove, that every Page or every Line of the Holy Scripture carries imprinted in it a sensible Character of the Splendor of the Holy Ghost that inspir'd it. Take the best Book, if you pull it to pieces, you lessen the Value of it. 'Tis only esteemed for the happy Assemblage of Words and Things of which it is compos'd: After you have destroy'd the Proportion and the Symmetry, you will no longer find what caus'd it to be admir'd. Let the whole Scripture be but duly consider'd, and it will be found to be a Work worthy of Heaven. There are
some

some Pieces of it without question, which being considered apart, cease not however to deserve our Admiration. But there are others, which being remov'd out of their proper place, will appear very common. Let us look upon the Scripture in that Point of Perfection, as the Holy Ghost represents it to us, and we must needs acknowledge it to be his Work.

It were to be wish'd, some will say, that the Holy Ghost had manifested himself more distinctly in the Writings of the New Testament. How! would ye that the Holy Ghost should not have spoken the Language of Men? I confess indeed, that he might have spoken the Language of the Third Heaven, but it would not have been intelligible to us, who are not there as yet. Since he spoke to Men, to the end they might understand him, 'twas necessary he should conform his Scyle to human Apprehension. He was oblig'd to take upon him our Manners, our Words, our Shape, and our Air to convert us. To that purpose he made choice of Men, made as we are, after they were sufficiently instructed in what they had to say to us; and he was to guide their Pens for fear they should make any false step. Had the Holy Ghost either sent an Angel, or form'd a Voice in the Air, to settle the Doctrine of Heaven, such means had appear'd more extraordinary, but they were not fit for Instruction. It was the Wildom of God to prefer *Useful* before *Admirable*.

The only Difficulty is to know which way to find out, that they who wrote like other Men were guided by the Holy Ghost. There are two Ways whereby to attain to this Knowledge; the One is the Attestation of the Apostles strengthened by the Proofs which they have given of their Sincerity; and by the Miracles by which they made it appear, that they were Men who were sent from God. The other Way is to search into the Composition it self of the Sacred Books for Proofs of their Inspiration. As to the first way, 'tis not our Intention at present to call it in question.

As to the Second, I shall conclude in a few Words. 'Tis a strange thing to consider the various Oppositions of human Wit. This Book wherein some behold the Finger of God, by others is look'd upon as a Piece of human Workmanship. Let us impartially examine the Matter. The profane must acknowledge, that they are prepossessed in their Judgments which they make of the Scripture: for when they read another Piece, that is but a little study'd according to the Rules of Art, they are charm'd with it; they cry 'tis all divine; they affirm, that there is nothing great without Inspiration. But when they come to the Scripture, they are quite of another Opinion; they despise what they would have admir'd in another Book. Nevertheless, it has so happen'd, that upon some Occasions the Force of Truth has extorted several Approbations in favour of Moses, the Prophets and S. Paul. The

*Nibil
magnum
sine affla-
tu divinis.*

World has found that there was something extraordinary in those great Men. But if we would but search into the Original of the Scripture without prepossession, we should soon confess, that it is a Work of Heaven. This does not appear perhaps upon the first Reading. Read it again, and the more you read that Book, the less you will be weary of reading it; nay, it will appear more lovely the last time than the first.

Had I to do with Christians only that with delight have read over and over again the New Testament, I would refer 'em to their own Experience, and ask 'em whether their Hearts ever found that Satisfaction in any other Book which they found in this. But it behoves us to speak something which may be more generally satisfactory. Was ever known a Doctrine more sublime, or Instructions of a purer Extraction. 'Tis true, that there are in the World certain People who have so disguis'd this Doctrine, as to make it appear low and mean. Now I consider it such as it is in it self; in this Prospect I dare say, that Men never saw any Book so much worthy of their Admiration.

This Argument, is not proper but for persons that have absolutely declared themselves against the Christian Religion. *M. N.* will say, that the Question, whether it be inspired or no, is not the Subject of the Dispute. He grants that Jesus Christ was divinely inspir'd; and in regard it was by him, that his Evangelists and Apostles were instructed, 'tis clear that the Religion which they preach'd,

preach'd, bears the Character of its first Au-
thor.

I must confess, that the Question between
M. N. and my self, chiefly concerns the
Manner how they publish'd those Truths
which they learn'd from the Lord. Our Au-
thor believes, that in that respect, they were
left to their own Judgment, and that there
is no necessity of admitting the Assistance of
the Holy Ghost into the Composition of
their Writings. On the other side, I pre-
tend to make it out in the Series of this
Discourse, that without that assistance the
Scripture is of little use. Now as the Argu-
ment upon which I insist in this Chapter is
drawn from a serious Inspection into the Sa-
cred Books, I assert, that if they be well con-
sidered, it will appear that their Composition
is not purely human. I shall not prove this
Proposition by heaping together the noble
Passages that are to be found from time to
time in the Writings of the Apostles; I only
ask who these new Authors were, that spake
so worthily of the Religion which they
preach. We find among 'em *Galileans*, that
is to say, home-bred ignorant People, born
in a Country where there was nothing of
Politeness; we find 'em to be Fishermen,
that is to say, People by their Profession
rude and unpolish'd. By them, let us judge
of the rest, since 'tis agreed, that if any one
of the Apostles were inspir'd in Writing,
the Question is decided. Where was it then,
that these Authors learn'd to write well?
Let us grant, that their Writings are not so

fine as the Books which the World esteems. The Authors of those Books had the Help both of Study and Art, which is all human. But where was it that the Sacred Authors learn'd their Manner of Writing?

We find that the Question is not whether the Writings of the Apostles are more eloquent than those which the World admires. Suppose an Equality as to that matter, that's nothing to my purpose: the Business is to know where the Apostles learn'd their Manner of writing those things which they deliver. Upon the Day of the *Pentecost* they spoke new Languages, that other Men spoke. But the Miracle was this, that the Apostles spoke Languages which they had never learn'd before. Some will say, tho to little purpose, where was the Miracle, seeing that others spoke as well as they? 'Tis true indeed, the Apostles write as other Men; but here is the Difference not to be contested, that the Apostles had never learn'd to write; and I think this may pass for a good proof of the Inspiration of the New Testament.

C H A P.

CHAP. X.

Wherein the Inspiration of the Books of the New Testament is made out from the Nature of the Covenant of which they are the Writings.

IT appears by inspecting into these Books, that they belong to a Covenant which God has manifested with much more Advantage than the Old Testament. The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, says, that *Jesus Christ was the Mediator of a better Covenant.* This Covenant is better in divers Respects. It is not to be contested, but that it is better in respect of Light and Certainty. I understand from the Writings of the New Testament, that the Old one presented nothing but Types and Shadows. *S. John* opposes Truth to the Law in point of Evidence: *The Law*, says he, *was given by Moses*, but *Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*. *S. Paul* insists upon the same Opposition, in his Second Epistle to the *Corinthians*: *But if the Gospel be bid*, says he, *it is bid to those that perish.* And he gives this Reason for it. *For God*, says he, *who commanded the Lights to shine out of darkness, hath shin'd in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ.* These Expressions are very

John 1. 17.

2 Cor. 4.
3, 6.

clear, and make out as evidently as it is possible, the Inspiration of *S. Paul*. It is necessary to bear it in remembrance; but I insist at present only upon the Advantage of the New Covenant, which is to be more full of Light and Clearness than the former.

This being granted, I consider the Degrees of Light that enlighten'd the Old Covenant. I find that the Prophets, who were inspir'd by the Holy Ghost, instructed the Ages they liv'd in; but they also transmitted that Inspiration to the succeeding Ages by their Writings, which were consulted with as much Religion, as they would have consulted their Authors had they been alive. Those Sacred Monuments were read, as they would have hearken'd to the Prophets themselves. The Mouth of God spake still in their Writings. The Nation of the *Jews* was of this Opinion, except, as it is commonly thought, a Handful of Sadducees, who, the better to defend their Errors, entrench'd themselves in the Pentateuch. However, this does not hinder *Josephus* from saying in

Answer to Apion. c. 2. *Moreover, there can be nothing more certain, than the Writings authoriz'd among us, in regard they are not liable to any Contrariety, in regard there is nothing approv'd but what the Prophets wrote several Ages since, according to the Purity of Truth, by the Inspiration, and by the Impulse of the Spirit of God. Neither do we trouble our selves with infinite Numbers of Books that contradict one another, as having no more than Twenty two, &c. And a little after,*

ter, *We have so profound a Respect for these Books, that never any Body was so hardy as to undertake either to add or diminish, or alter the least Tittle. We look upon 'em as Divine: we call 'em so: we profess to observe 'em inviolably, and joyfully to lay down our Lives, if there be occasion, in defence of 'em.*

Nothing can more clearly express the high Opinion which the Jewish Church had of the Sacred Books that compose the Old Testament. And *Josephus* is more to be believ'd upon this Subject, than a modern Author, who tell us, that the Prophets had no other Assistance of the Holy Ghost, than a pious Disposition which made 'em write like persons of Sincerity, but without any Prerogative of Infallibility. But this was not *Josephus's* Opinion; this was not the Belief of the Jewish Church; this was not the Judgment of *S. Peter*, who declares, that *Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

Nor is there any farther doubt to be made of it after the Decision of *S. Paul*. *The whole Scripture is divinely inspir'd, and profitable for Instruction.* I shall not make any stop at the nice Cavil of *Grotius*, who would make *S. Paul* to say, *The whole Scripture which is divinely inspired is profitable, &c.* The Answer of *Theophilact* is sufficient. They are to know, says he, that the Apostle said, *thou hast been bred up from thy Infancy in the Holy Scriptures.* He says, *All Scripture: what Scripture does he mean? The same of which he said, that it was Sacred.* It was in truth, in all the parts of Scripture, that *Tamary* had been

been instructed from his Infancy. St. Paul therefore exhorting him to persevere in the things which he had learn'd, would not have argu'd rightly, if when he urg'd it as a motive for his perseverance, that all *Scripture* was inspir'd, he had not spoke of the whole Book which the *Jews* look'd upon to be all *Scripture*.

In the Main, the observation of *Grotius* does my argument no harm, though it were well grounded; for the design of that Author is only to deprive the Historical Books of the Old Testament of the Honour of Inspiration. He acknowledges in another place, that *Moses*, *Isaiab*, *Jeremias*, *Ezekiel*, *David* and *Daniel* were divinely Inspired. So that according to *Grotius* the Jewish Church had Books wherein the Holy Ghost spake. Had they need of the Spirit of God, they found it in the writings of the Prophets: and this Light has constantly endur'd in all Ages of the Jewish Church, even in the later times, as corrupt as they were.

Ought we not to have a Light at least equal to it, under an Oeconomy, wherein it is agreed, that God has manifested himself with more advantage than under the Law? We have no longer any Apostles; there are no longer any men inspir'd, if we have not writings which repair that loss, by means of that Infallibility with which the Holy Ghost would have invested them. To whom is it not apparent, that our condition is worse than that of the ancient *Jews*? The Day shin'd out to them, but it is Night with us.

All

All the advantage is on the side of the Carnal posterity of *Abraham*, even of that which is rejected. The Jews had formerly, and still have Books wherein they find the infallible Voice of God. But if we believe *Id. N.* we must rely upon the Credit of Histories which some persons of sincerity have written for the Doctrine of our Saviour, and to the arguments which only sound Reason and Judgment dictated to Authors without Logic or Education. I cannot believe that this Hypothesis will ever be relished by those who are never so little acquainted with the Prerogatives of the Christian Church.

CHAP. XI.

Wherein the Inspiration of the Books of the New Testament is made out by the Prerogatives of the Apostles.

THE best way which we have to know certainly whether the Christian Church has not as great a share of divine Illumination as the Jewish Church, is to see what sort of Persons the Authors of the New Testament were. The Jewish Church had Prophets and we have Apostles: our Books, except two or three which were made under the inspection of the Apostles, were written by this order and with the approbation of the Apostles. There needs no more than to see whether

whether our Apostles were not equal in worth to the Prophets of the Old Testament. C.2. v.10. In the Epistle to the Ephesians I find them equalled together, in the work of Salvation; *being built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.* In this place to speak of Equality would be an injury to the Apostles, in regard that here they are named before the Prophets.

Nor is it without good Ground that I make this observation, since St. Paul's Custom is to put the Apostles at the head of the Ministers of the Christian Church. She had also Prophets, and Prophets inspir'd like those of the Old Testament. Would you know which are the most Excellent, the Apostles or the Prophets? There needs no more than to see what rank they hold in the Catalogue which St. Paul gives of the Ministers of Grace. *First Apostles, secondarily Prophets, then Teachers.* Besides, that this is a Place where the Apostle is bound to mark out to every one his Station: Chance had no share in Ranging them under that Order. So that we find that St. Paul observes the same Order in the sequel of his Argument. *Are all Apostles? are all Prophets? are all Teachers?* In his Epistle to the Ephesians the Evangelists are set before the Teachers; but he is constant in the precedency which he gives the Apostles before the Prophets. He has appointed some for Apostles, and others for Prophets. Nevertheless, notwithstanding his humility, he gives the first Place to his own Dignity; when he acted

1 Cor. 12.
38.

1 Cor. 13.
29.

in his Apostleship he gave way to no Man. If we may believe him, the Apostles of the Christian Church were more excellent than the Prophets.

Nor do we too highly exalt the Apostleship, by adding, that it included in it self all the advantages affixed to the inferior Degrees. The Apostles were Prophets and Teachers; they had the Gift of working Miracles, which the Holy Ghost divided among them. *Had they all the Gift of Healing? Did they all speak divers Languages? Did they all Interpret?* No; but the Apostles did all this; the Grace of the Apostleship included all other Graces. We ought not slightly to pass by the words of Saint Paul, when designing to set forth, that subordination which Grace had established in the Primitive Church by the variety of Gifts; he declares, *that to every one is given the manifestation of the Holy Ghost, so far as is expedient.* Though St. Paul had not said it, 'tis a Truth which common Sense would have given us to understand. For do we not find that it is incumbent upon the wisdom of God to order the Means according to the Purpose which he proposes to himself. Let us then say, that the Apostles had a measure of the Holy Ghost proportionable to the designs of the Apostleship. They had at least as much of the Spirit of Truth, as the Prophets had received. We say, *at least*; for in regard the Apostolic Writings were to be serviceable toward the edification of the Church at all times and in all places, 'tis clear

clear that those Writings wanted a more especial assistance than those other, of which the primitive use was only for a particular Nation, and for a very limited time. But 'tis sufficient for me to extend the force of my Argument so far, that the Prerogative ought at least to be equal. If then the writings of the Prophets were inspir'd, as I have prov'd, certainly the writings of the Apostles, who were the more excellent, ought *a fortiori*, to be inspired.

1 Pet. 1.
12.

'Tis not any thing of personal Excellence which is the Business in dispute; for the Prophets and Apostles are not to be here considered, but with reference to the Use that they were made for. The Prophets were not Prophets for themselves, *unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the Things, &c.* The Apostles were not Apostles for themselves; but it was for our sakes that they administer'd. They are our Masters, we are grounded upon their Writings. Let us compare the Prophets and the Apostles, we shall find, that as it is certain that the Apostles were much more excellent than the Prophets, 'twas requisite they should have a more advantageous share of the Holy Ghost. They stood in need of a lively and durable Light which was not to be extinguish'd by time, but to enlighten all Ages.

I do not believe this argument is to be eluded with the least Tittle of Solidity. Some will say, that we ought to look upon the Writings of the Prophets with a more awful respect,

respect, because upon some occasions we find that they speak like Prophets, and as it were the immediate Embassadors of God. But this Consideration brings no advantage to the writings of the Old Testament. For we see something of the same nature in the greatest part of those of the New Testament; even in those, wherein according to *M. N.* there are the fewest of the inspired Passages. I speak of the Epistles of *St. Paul*, which he begins with a Preface wherein is to be seen, under what Quality he writes; *Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ*. He writes like an Apostle, like a man inspired by the Spirit of God; like a man set apart to preach the Gospel. The Title is sufficient to shew that he wrote like an Apostle, and with all the advantages of the Grace of the Apostleship. Infallibility was one of the dependencies upon that Grace: for the Holy Ghost conferr'd it upon every one so far as was expedient. Was it not expedient that the first Ministers of the Gospel should be infallible, when they proclaimed such Mysteries to the VWorld? It is visible that the Grace of Infallibility was necessary in the exercise of the Apostleship. The Question then returns to this? Did *S. Paul* exercise his Apostleship in writing? Did he make use of that Grace in his VVritings?

We cannot have a better Testimony than himself, who tells us that he wrote as an Apostle of the Lord. By virtue of that Character which he assumes in the Prefaces of his writings, he exacts from us our Belief of all that he says. To contradict him in any thing,

thing, is to dishonour the Apostleship, and to offend the Holy Spirit who made the Apostles. From time to time St. Paul informs us, even in the body of his Epistles, that it is by virtue of the Grace of God which he has received as an Apostle that he instructs his Readers. For I say, through the Grace given unto me, to every man among you, says he to the Romans. He lays his Foundation according to the Grace of God, and he builds upon that Foundation according to the Grace which is given him; that Grace which he so frequently mentions with such great Elogies. In the first Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans he calls it Grace by way of Excellency; *By whom we have received Grace and Apostleship, &c.* In his Epistle to the Ephesians he speaks of this Grace with a greater emphasis, *whereof I was made a Minister, according to the gift of the Grace of God given unto me, by the effectual working of his power; to me is this Grace given, &c.* The Grace of the Apostleship was then a Gift of the first Degree; and according to that degree it was, that St. Paul both taught and wrote. But besides the testimony which St. Paul gives of himself, we have on his behalf the attestation of Saint Peter, who tells us that St. Paul wrote according to the wisdom which was given to him. This is a Talent which he had not hid in the Ground; he could not do it: I speak thus, not only in reference to the probity of Saint Paul, who had too much Sincerity to disguise the Counsel of God; but because the Counsel of God was such, that the Gospel should

should be preserv'd in its Purity, by the means of the Apostolick writings. This was the Business of the Almighty, nor could the Apostles but obey that Sovereign Order upon which depended the Salvation of the whole World. The Apostles wrote according to that wisdom which God had imparted to them: which clearly enough confirms their Inspiration. Nor have the Prophetic Writings any stronger argument on their side.

C H A P. XII.

Wherein the Inspiration of the Books of the New Testament is made out by the Promise which Jesus Christ made of his Spirit to the Authors of it.

IT will be easie to make a Demonstration of this to Persons who are convinc'd that Christ had sincerity and Power sufficient to perform his Promises. *But the Comforter which a Joh. 14. is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my 26* Name, said Jesus to his Apostles, *he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.* This Promise puts us in hopes of two things: the one is, that the Apostles should be instructed by the Holy Ghost in reference to their Apostleship: the second is, that the Holy Spirit would bring distinctly to their Remem-

The Holy Scriptures Inspired.

Remembrance, whatever they had heard their Master say.

¶ We ought to observe that our Lord and Saviour makes this Promise at a time when he was desirous to comfort his afflicted Apostles. He had declared that he was about to leave them. What shall we then do, said they to themselves? Thou hast established us Masters in Israel, while thou art with us, we shall acquit our selves of our Ministry without any trouble or disquiet; if we meet with difficulties, thou art here to resolve them; we are assur'd that we shall speak the truth, while we speak after Thee. Therefore Jesus Christ, to deliver them out of this Perplexity, promises them an Infallible Spirit that should remain with them all along. I

John 4.
16.

will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. In the Verse which I cited before, Christ explains the Function of this new Comforter. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

C. 15. 26.

16. v. 13.

In the following Chapter, this Comforter is for the same Reason called the Spirit of Truth; and his Function is more particularly described in the 16th Chapter, where it is said, that the Spirit of truth should guide the Apostles in all truth. This was a general Promise which dissipated the disquiet of those Holy men. They had been already assured that they should never want words when they should be called before Tribunals. And when they bring you unto the Synagogues, and unto Magistrates and Pow-

Luke 12.
11, 12.

waited only on the Holy Ghost, who was ready to lead them
upon the Point of being baptized before Ma-
gister. Now was this the holy occasion
wherein the Disciples of the Lord had need
of his assistance, he makes them a much lar-
ger promise, and assures them that the Holy
Ghost shall guide them in all truth, so that
they may fulfil the Functions of their Ap-
postleship.

A Promise so glorious, from the Infalli-
bility of the Apostles above all manner of Ob-
jections. So long to our Lord and Saviour
shall be acknowledged for Infallible, we must
confess that his Promise has been fulfill'd, and
that as he had promised, his Apostles exempt
from error, were guided in all truth. Every
Christian is bound to acknowledge the Re-
ality of this Promise, and by consequence the
infallibility of the Apostles. They were
guided in all truth and consequently they
were infallible. These are expressions which
carry one and the same sense.

I do not pretend to drive the thing so far,
as to maintain upon this Foundation, that
the Apostles were universally instructed in
all things, even in such things as had no re-
lation to their Apostleship. The Holy Ghost
did not impart himself to those Holy Men,
but in what they stood in need of as Apostles,
and Teachers of Mankind. What they did

that was, to the end they might

as (only) was under the Roman Law: the basis
of the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Spirit's inspiration
notwithstanding. When they preached the Gospel
when they made their defence of the
Magistrates when they were concerned
Christianity, when they debated matters of
Pious. There were A certain Foundation which
they performed by the direction of the Spirit
of Truth, the Disciples of the Lord Jesus

Now, I am of opinion that the Holy Spirit's
direction of the Apostles is to be understood upon this
occasion, that the Promise which is to be fulfilled
is: For what shall we do to be saved? that
it should be accomplished, if not in this
time, when the Glory and Infallibility of
this writing is as clear as the sun, and as
personal testimony of the Christian Faith.
Where could it be more clearly seen than
the Holy Spirit's direction of the Apostles?
The Holy Spirit's direction of the Apostles
was a clear and undeniable fact, and it was
the same in all ages, and in all places.
The Holy Spirit's direction of the Apostles
was a clear and undeniable fact, and it was
the same in all ages, and in all places.

Christians are bound to acknowledge the Re-
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all things, even in such things as had no re-
lation to their Apostleship. The Holy Spirit
did not inspire himself to those Holy Men,
but in what they stood in need of as Apostles,
and Teachers of Mankind. What the Holy
Spirit directed, to the end that they might

CHAP. XIII.

Wherein the Inspiration of the New Testament is made out by the fulfilling of the Promise of Jesus Christ.

Nothing is more proper to explain the sense of a divine Promise than the performance of it. I have said, that our Lord and Saviour promis'd his Apostles the assistance of his Spirit in all their Apostolic Functions: Let no body mistake himself in maintaining, that by this general Promise our Saviour meant the Gifts of Miracles which never failed the Apostles in the exercise of their Duties. If that were the whole extent of the Promise, M. N. would assert, that the Miracles of the Apostles would be no good proofs of their Infallibility, because several private men have had the Gift of Miracles that were not infallible.

Though it were true that the Miracles which the Primitive Christians wrought were no proofs of the certainty and soundness of their Faith, yet I say that the same argument is not to be made use of in reference to the Apostles, as in relation to other Christians. Let us always look upon the Apostles as Instruments that God has made choice of to instruct all Mankind. Let us never quit that Idea, to the end we may understand

after a just and true manner the nature of those Graces which the Holy Ghost imparted to them. Let it be asserted, that the gift of working Miracles was not incompatible with the infidelity of several bad Christians, that cannot be averred in reference to the Apostles, because it was by their means that God instructed his whole Church. He could not suffer them to go astray in teaching any thing that was false, while he imparted to them the gift of Miracles. Otherwise he would have authoriz'd a Lye in the Apostles, and all those Swervings and Deviations, wherein they might have engag'd the Church which was utterly opposite to his design, which was to make them Ministers of the Truth. I have good reason therefore to infer from the Spirit of Miracles, that our Saviour promised and granted to his Apostles, that he would continue to them that Infallibility, which was a Prerogative necessary to their Apostleship.

I should reason thus, although our Saviour had only barely promis'd his Spirit of Miracles to his Apostles. But we stand upon a much more solid Foundation, seeing that he expressly promises *a Spirit of Truth; a Spirit which should teach all things; a Spirit that should guide them in all Truth.* The Truth, or Infallibility is the principal thing which he promises. If he were so faithful as to his promise of the Gifts of Miracles, would he have been less punctual in a Promise upon which he much more remarkably insisted?

I shall not make any stop in discoursing of the manner how this Promise of Infallibility was fulfilled, in any other places than in the writings of the Apostles; to which I am only to confine my self. The only Use which I would make of other occasions, should be to conclude, that if our Saviour gave his Spirit of Truth to the Apostles upon occasions of less importance, than when they wrote concerning Religion, the reason is so much the stronger, that he assisted them in their writings. For instance, I find that in the Council of *Jerusalem*, where the Question was debated, Whether the Christians should submit themselves to the Yoke of Circumcision; the Holy Ghost directs the Consultations of the Apostles, and empow'r's them to say, *It has seemed meet to us and to the Holy Spirit.* How is it probable that he forsook the Apostles in the Composition of Writings which contain'd the Sovereign Decision of all the important Questions that could be put up in the Church? The Consequence is true: for seeing the Holy Ghost presided in the Council of *Jerusalem*, it is not to be conceiv'd, that he neglected writings of much greater moment, than that Council was.

Let us come a little nearer to the inspiration of these Sacred Writings. The Promise of this Spirit of Truth has been fulfilled: it has enlighten'd the Apostles: let us judge of all the rest by *St. Paul*, the last who was called. He tells the *Corinthians*, that the Holy Spirit instructed him; *But God has revealed*

them unto us by his Spirit. Now we have received not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which mans wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual Things with spiritual. In another place, the same Apostle says, that because of the Excellency of the Revelation wherewith he was honoured, a Thorn was given him, lest he should be exalted above measure.

2 Cor. 12.
7.

He compares this *Illumination* to that which God wrought at the beginning of the World when he commanded Light out of Darkness. So that there is no question but that St. Paul was inspir'd; and if he, then all the rest of the Apostles also. But to what purpose would this *Inspiration* have serv'd, had it not been transmitted into their Writings. Those Holy Men were inspir'd that they might be able to instruct the Church. If the Holy Spirit, after he had imparted to them his Light, had not taken care to diffuse it into their Writings, it would have been absolutely useless to us. I conclude from thence, that the Spirit of Truth after it had illuminated their Minds, guided their Pens, to the end their Light might be transmitted to Posterity. There are particular Passages that positively prove the fulfilling of the Promise, as I have said already; but they deserve a Chapter by themselves.

CHAP.

Matters of Religion. More especially it ought to be observed, that it is not true, that the Prophets always began their Prophetic Writings with these Words, *The Mouth of the Lord hath spoken*. Let 'em read the Five Books of *Moses*, and they shall find several Proofs of what I affirm. That Legislator without any more ado begins with these Words: *In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*. Nor is the Book of *Exodus* signaliz'd with any other better Character of Inspiration. Nevertheless, 'tis known, that those Two Books are no less inspir'd, than the Prophecies that command Attention with these Words at the Beginning, *The Mouth of the Lord hath spoken*. Let 'em not therefore have a worse Opinion of the Writings of the New Testament, under pretence that these Words are not there.

In the Old Testament, that which was merely Historical, was not introduc'd with this Preface, *The Mouth of the Lord hath spoken*. This is usually reserv'd for parts that are purely Prophetic, wherein the Spirit of God had a singular Concern. Now I affirm, that the New Testament, in those parts that contain some Prophecies, marks out their Original as distinctly as if the Apostles had said, *The Spirit of the Lord hath spoken*. As for the Historical Parts, and such as undertake Argument, 'tis not to be thought strange, if we do not there meet with the same Character. That is common to both Testaments; they never expressly attribute to God any more than his Oracles. But that is

no Obstruction, but that what those Holy Men either wrote or thought under the Guidance of the Holy Ghost, may not be in some measure inspir'd. I shall discourse of that more distinctly in the Series of this Treatise. I have said enough to shew, that the Old Testament has no advantage over the New, in respect of Inspiration, and that they are in the wrong who deny this Truth, under pretence that the Prophets say sometimes, *The Mouth of the Lord hath spoken*, but the Apostles never make use of that Expression.

As to what they add, that the Apostles never pretended to Inspiration, and that they have not mention'd any thing of it in their Writings, it is easie to be discern'd, that nothing stands upon a weaker Foundation, than this Objection. In short, the Apostles let us know, that they had receiv'd from Heaven what we call Prophetick Parts; sometimes it was in Vision, sometimes by the Suggestions of the Spirit. As to other Parts, besides that I have already observ'd, that the Works which compose the New Testament, are written by Authors which the Holy Ghost had invested with Endowments necessary to make that Book the Foundation of Truth, I could wish that something of Attention might be given to some express Passages of the New Testament.

S. Paul assures the *Corinthians*, that he had the Mind of Christ, *1 Cor. 2. 16.* and in another place, after he had given his Judgment upon several Scruples that arose in point of Marriage, he says that he speaks by per-
mission,

1 Cor. 2.

16.

Chap. 7.

mission, not by command; and that he gave his Judgment as one that has obtained a Victory of the Lord to be faithful. Is not this of as great Force, as if he had said, all these Instructions which I have given you were inspired into me by the Holy Ghost.

The Thing speaks it self: S. Paul assures, that what he wrote to the *Corinthians*, touching Marriage, was the Work of the Holy Ghost. For these Words, *Now I believe that I have the Spirit of God*, either signifie nothing where they are placed; or else they signifie, that what the holy S. Paul had wrote, was by the Guidance of the Holy Spirit.

'Tis the general Intention of this Apostle, that he should be look'd upon as a person in whom the Spirit of God resided, to render him capable to instruct others. The good thing that was committed unto thee, says he, by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us; since ye seek a Proof of Christ speaking in me. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit. If any man thinketh himself to be a Prophet or Spiritual let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you, are the Commandments of the Lord. All which Passages clearly shew, what Opinion it was that S. Paul desired Men should have of his Writings.

S. Peter is no less positive. This Second Epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, That ye may be mindful of the Words which were spoken before by the Holy Prophets, and of the Commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord

1 Tim. 1.

14.

2 Cor. 13.

3.

1 Theff. 4.

6.

2 Pet. 3. 1.

and *Saviour*. *S. Peter* in these Words designs two Things which are proper for our Subject. 1. He parallels that Epistle with the Writings of the Prophets. 2. He puts a great Value upon that Epistle, because it was written by an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Will any Man say, that a person who thus expresses himself did believe that the Writings of the Apostles were not inspir'd?

In the same Chapter, *S. Peter* gives an Authentick Testimony in favour of the Epistles of *S. Paul*; Even as our beloved Brother Paul also, according to the Wisdom given unto him, has also written unto you, as also in all his Epistles; speaking in them of these Things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures. These Words furnish us with two convincing Arguments in favour of the Inspiration of the Epistles of *S. Paul*. 1. They were written according to the Wisdom which *S. Paul* had receiv'd from Heaven: I have already touch'd upon this Argument. The other is, that the Epistles of *S. Paul* are reckon'd in the Number of the inspir'd Scriptures, which the ignorant and unstable wrest as they do the other Scriptures. Assuredly, by those other Scriptures, *S. Peter* means the inspir'd Scriptures, of which Jesus Christ says in another place, You go astray not knowing the Scriptures; and which the New Testament usually cites as the Work of the Holy Ghost. The Business in Hand is about the Scriptures which the unlearned wrest to their own destruction, which

1 Pet. 3.
15, 16.

which can be meant of no other than of the Holy Scripture. S. Paul does not complain of the Unlearned for wresting the Scriptures, but for wresting the other Scriptures. VVhence it is evident, that the Epistles of S. Paul are reckon'd in the Number of the inspir'd Scriptures. Can any thing be more positively express'd upon the Inspiration of the VVorks that make up the New Testament?

C H A P. XV.

Wherein is drawn from the Gift of Discerning of Spirits granted to the Primitive Christians a Proof, very much in Favour of the Sacred Books which the Apostles have left us.

MEN dispute about the Marks whereby they might formerly know the true Prophets. Commonly it is affirm'd, that Miracles, or the Accomplishment of the Prophecy was the true Proof of a real Prophet. But it may be said, that this is not always certain; for it would be a difficult thing to prove, that all the Prophets verified their Mission by Miracles, or by accomplish'd Prophecies. This was not altogether so necessary but when there was something of great Importance, that was the Subject of the Prophecy. For to what purpose was it

to make a great Noise and a stir, when there was nothing more in the Business, than to reduce Sinners into the right Path that had been traced by a Law supported by so many Miracles.

God never overturns the Laws of Nature, unless there be some necessary occasion: I should have rather said, that the Miracles of a true Prophet become serviceable to him that wrought none at all: wherein I thus explain my self. When a Prophet had justified his Mission by some Miracles, he was acknowledg'd for a Man of God. After which his Testimony was as good as a Miracle to other Prophets, while he acknowledg'd that those new Prophets were sent by the same Master. This Attestation remov'd all Occasion of Doubts. When we find that certain Books of the Old Testament want these authentick Proofs of their Divinity, which other Books have, that are look'd upon in the first Order of Canonical, we are confirm'd by understanding, that those Books, about which some Men would raise Disputes and Doubts, pass'd through the Hands of the last Prophets truly inspir'd. I say the same thing of persons; a Prophet whose Mission was not honor'd by Miracles was acknowledg'd upon the Inspiration of another Prophet whose Attestation had been prov'd.

I apply this Argument to my Subject. They who had no good Opinion of the Works of *S. Mark* and *S. Luke*, because they were not Apostles, ought to alter their Sentiment,

timent, when they consider, that the Evangelists had the Approbation of the Apostles. How shall we prove, that the Apostles were worthy to be credited? We have their Miracles; but we have also other Proof, from the Conduct which God observ'd in providing credible Testimonies among the Primitive Christians to justify the Apostles.

1 Cor. 12.
7, 8, 10.

'Tis known, that among them, there were several to whom God had granted the Talent of discerning Spirits. S. Paul is positive in it: *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. — To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of Spirits.* This is no bare natural Discerning, since it is reckon'd in the number of miraculous Gifts. The Spirit of God taught several Christians how to understand Persons, and Doctrines truly inspir'd. Several make no scruple to refer to this what S. Paul says of the Spiritual Man. *But he that is spiritual, judges all things.* This is to be understood of the things of God. *Let the Prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.* Thus you see the discerning of Spirits establish'd. Verse 22. of the same Chapter, 'tis said, *The Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets:* which is usually explain'd by saying, that the Prophets of the New Covenant were Masters of themselves to observe silence, till they had an opportunity to speak. But nothing hinders, but that it may be meant

1 Cor. 2.
15.

14. 29.

ment of that same Dependence which some of the Prophets had upon others; when the one explain'd the other. In which *Sanctify'd Prophecy* were subject to the Prophecy.

The same Chapter furnishes me with an undeniable Proof to uphold my Argument. Vers. 37.

If any Man think himself to be a Prophet or spiritual, says S. Paul, let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. If any one thinks himself to be a Prophet, or spiritual; that is, according to the Phrase of Scripture, *If any be a Prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge, &c.* Spiritual persons then might discern, if what S. Paul wrote came from the Lord. The Epistles of that Sacred Author pass'd for such a Proof which might well be call'd the Judgment of God, since it was God who inspir'd Spiritual Men. This Consideration may serve for the Understanding of several Places of S. Paul, he exposes his Writings to the Judgment of Spiritual Men, Men judicious and discerning, establish'd by Grace to corroborate the Authority of the Apostles. By that means it was plainly discern'd, that there was nothing spurious in their Writings; and that they contain'd neither Arguments nor Matters of Fact which were not exactly according to the Weights of the Sanctuary.

Spinoza and *M. N.* here propose some Scruples, but my Answer will be more intelligible,

telligible, when I have considered the Nature of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament. Which is that which I am going to undertake in the Second Part of this Treatise.

The same Chapter furnishes me with an undeniable Proof to uphold my Argument. I may think myself to be a Prophet or Spiritual, says 2 Paul, let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the

commandments of the Lord. If any one think himself to be a Prophet, or Spiritual; let him according to the Rule of Scripture, let him be a Prophet, or Spiritual, let him acknowledge, &c. Spiritual persons then might

The End of the First Part.

that paid for such a Proof which might well be called the Judgment of God, since it was God who inspired Spiritual Men. I thus Consideration may leave for the Understanding of several Places of 2 Paul, he expresses his Warnings to the Judgment of Spirit

that Men, Men hypocrites and dissembling, established by Grace to corroborate the authority of the Apostles. By that means it was plainly evident that there was nothing false in their Warnings; and that they contained neither Argument nor Reason. The which were not exactly according to the Warnings of the Sanctity.

2 Paul, and M. N. here propose some Examples, but my Answer will be more than sufficient to show that they are not

The Second Part.

CHAP. I.

Wherein it is shewn, that 'tis not the Common Belief that the Sacred Books of the New Testament were dictated word for word by the immediate Suggestion of the Holy Ghost.

WHEN we go about to disabuse the Publick of an Error, 'tis necessary that it should be notoriously manifest, that it is publicly received; in which case, the notoriouſness of it supplies the Proof; or at least if the thing be not so evidently known, 'tis requisite we should give our selves the trouble to prove it. For if it so falls out that Men undertake to undeceive the Publick, when it is not deceived, 'twill be a sufficient reason to complain of the injury, and to upbraid a misinform'd Author, and not very charitable neither, with his unprofitable pains. This M. N. ought to have consider'd, before he told the World, to give some Colour to his *Memoir*, 'Tis in

Senti-
ments.
p. 232.

the first place believed, that the Things themselves were insu'd by Inspiration into the Sacred Historians, and then the Terms wherein they were express'd. In short, That the Sacred History was dictated word for word by the Holy Ghost; and that the Authors, whose Names are affixed to it, were the Secretaries of God who wrote as he dictated to them. This is that which M. N. calls in several places the vulgar Opinion. What means he by *Vulgar*? Is it among the People? You shall hardly meet with one of a thousand that ever thought of this Doctrine. Is it among the Learned? Then he ought to have prov'd it by good Citations. Number of Quotations commonly spoiles a Book; But when it is a man's Business to prove a matter of Fact which serves for a Foundation to a Book, and that this matter of Fact becomes a matter of Controversie; the want of Quotations is in my Opinion very Essential. At least M. N. ought to have repair'd this defect in the Defence of his *Memoir*. But since he has not done it, we have great reason to believe he could not do it. All that he says is this, *That after the death of Grotius, there appear'd a third Answer of Rivet, wherein he endeavoured to defend the Common Opinion against his Illustrious Antagonist.* 'tis clearly to be seen by the manner of his Answer, that he believ'd that the Holy Ghost dictated the Scripture word for word, and we know that it is the most common Opinion among the Protestants, who every moment call the Sacred Writers the Amanuenses of the Holy Ghost. I read that
part

part of *River's Piece*, but could not there find it out that this was his Opinion: and I deny it to be the Common Opinion of our Divines.

It was not the Opinion of *Burman*, the Famous Professor of *Utrecht*. He asserts, that the Sacred Writers wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, whose Instruments in a manner they were. Those words seem'd to favour *M. N's* Pretension. But let us consider what *Burman* meant by *Inspiration*, and by that means we may be able to explain several Expressions which are to be found in our Authors. That Author seems to suppose, that the Sacred Writers were but the Instruments by which the Holy Ghost wrote word for word whatever they left us. However that is done, continues the same Author, with some variety: in some things which they were taught of God, they were but bare Amanuenses.

In others they wrote like Historians according to the wisdom that was given them. They dictated themselves some things as faithful and prudent Stewards in the House of God, according to the Measure of Gifts which they had receiv'd.

Quod tamēn factum cum aliqua varietate.

Quadam

enim à Deo audita aut revelata vero Amanuensium ministerio scripserunt. Quadam etiam historica, tum narrando tum docendo commentati sunt secundum sapientiam sibi datam 2 Pet. 3. Nonnulla etiam ipsi declarunt, tanquam ministri fideles & prudentes in domo Dei juxta accepta spiritus sancti dona. Burman de verb. div. & scrip. divinis. lect. 23.

Monsieur *Wassius* a learned Professor in the same University, teaches the same Do-

Fuerunt quidem Apostoli Instrumenta spiritus sancti, sed rationalia: suo enim intellectu, iudicio & sermone utebantur. Ita tamen ut in eorum omnium usu dirigerentur à spiritu sancto; Qui non adimebat ratiocinandi facultatem, quam natura concesserat, sed eam Cælesti lumine collustratam, & circa ponderosam hanc questionem meditationibus suis occupatam, arcana sua virtute, ita in iudicando gubernabat, ut quod ipsis videbatur, revera dictamen spiritus sancti esset. L. I. c. 22. sect. 19.

Strine. Some of the Apostles, says he, were the Instruments of the Holy Ghost, but Instruments endued with Reason, who made use of their own Understanding, their Judgment, and their own Language; yet so, that notwithstanding all this, they were directed by the Holy Ghost. He did not take from them their natural Faculty of reasoning; but after he had enlighten'd it with Celestial Illumination, he directed and govern'd it by his secret virtue, that the Result of their Meditations might be the Voice of God. Here is no such thing as Teaching that the Holy Ghost

dictated word for word (to speak properly) all those things which were written by the Apostles. Were these two Professors ever Censur'd for having departed from the Common Belief?

Not to heap up Quotations, I shall only observe two things which will supply their number: the one is, that *M. Capel*, a famous Professor at *Saumur*, and some other Protestant Divines were somewhat enclined to believe that the Apostles might be deceived in some small Circumstances of matters of Fact which they relate; as in Numbers and Names, &c. I hope to shew in the following Chapters, that it is not at all necessary to grant that for the reconciling
of

of certain places which give some Colour to this Belief. The only thing which I have here to observe is this, that neither *M. Capel*, nor those other Divines, who are so pliable to favour the pretended Defects of the Apostles memory, did ever believe that the Holy Ghost dictated to them the whole, word for word. For he that could believe that, could never question the Infallibility of every Syllable.

The other Observation which I make is this, that the Common Belief of the Protestant Divines is, that the Apostles made use of their Reason, their Memory, and a Language which favoured much of their Education and their natural Genius. Let us conclude from thence, that the common Opinion is not, that the Apostles, when they wrote, were under a perpetual *Enthusiasm*, and that they only supplied the Holy Ghost with their Pens, while he dictated to them word for word whatever they wrote. To put an end to this Observation, I may say that I have consulted upon this Point, several Divines both *English* and *French*, and yet could never meet with one that was of this Opinion, which *M. N.* calls the *Common Opinion*.

I must confess, that because hitherto none of our Divines has yet dressed up any System upon this Subject, but onely that several have spoken of it by the by, many expressions have escap'd them, of which an ill use might be made to make the World believe, that their Opinion is exactly the

same which *M. N.* ascribes to them. According to their Language, the Sacred Writers are the Secretaries of the Holy Ghost; he inspires them whatever they write. But these Expressions, and all those of the like nature may subsist without supposing such an Inspiration as is attributed to us. I shall make out hereafter: It's enough for this place, to say, that all those Expressions that our Divines have made use of in imitation of the ancient Fathers of the Church, are made good by that share which the Holy Ghost has in the Sacred Writings of the New Testament. It contains several Oracles which the Holy Ghost did dictate: as for other things, the Apostles were under the immediate direction of the Holy Ghost, who infallibly guiding their Pens, adopted whatever they wrote. Such a Guidance as cannot be denied, without overthrowing Fundamentals. Which being granted, all Divines may bestow all those honourable Expressions upon the Apostolic Writings, and look upon them as the work of the Holy Ghost. This is the Idea, which we have in general of the Inspiration of these Sacred Writings, and which we are now going more particularly to explain.

CHAP. II

Wherein is explained the nature of the Inspiration of the New Testament, in respect of Revelations.

THAT we may have a distinct Idea of the Inspiration of the Holy Writings, 'tis requisite to distinguish the Things which they contain; which I shall do into three Orders. In the first I shall put the Revelations. The second is for those things which the Apostles learn'd by the natural assistances of their Hearing and Sight. In the third you shall see the Progress which they made by reasoning upon the Truths of the two first Orders. This distinction presents it self at first to the mind; so that you see the Apostles wrote things which they knew by Revelation, by Sense, or by reasoning. I design this Chapter for the Truths which they understood by way of Revelation.

There is no need of insisting long upon it; because there does not appear to be any Contest between *M. N.* and us upon this Subject. He agrees, that the Apostles have said several things by Inspiration. *I acknowledge, says he, that the Apostles might have certain Prophetic Inspirations, and that they really had such.* *Sentim. p. 240. lb. p. 252.* And in another place, Not

but that they had several immediate Inspirations and several Visions, as appears by the AEs, by the Apocalypse, and by divers other parts of their Writings. And toward the end of the twelfth Letter, There are several Prophecies scattered in their Writings, and the Apocalypse is altogether Prophetic: and we ought to give Credit to those Revelations, because it was God that sent them immediately to his Apostles. M. N. constantly maintains this Thesis in the defence of his Sentiments; where he also advances something more to the purpose, since he believes that God did often dictate to the Apostles the words which they were to make use of.

Defence.
p. 225.

We both agree then, that there are in the VVritings of the Apostles several things which those Holy Men learn'd by the way of Suggestion. There needs no more to put the Business past all dispute but to read the Apostolick writings themselves. There it is to be seen, that the Apostles were often instructed by all the ways which God made use of to inspire the Prophets with his Oracles. I understand from Grotius, that according to the Jews, this Inspiration was perform'd four ways: by Visions in the day time;

Solet Deus hominibus voluntatem suam, aut res futuras patefacere, visis Diurnis, visis secundum quietem, voce & afflatu. Grot. in 1. Matt.

by Dreams in the Night; by a Voice from Heaven: and by the secret suggestion of the Holy Ghost. These four Orders of Revelations are to be found in the Apostolic Writings. The Apocalypse contains several Visions by Day; 'twas in the

the

the day time that St. Peter had a Vision in the behalf of the Centurion *Cornelius*. The Apostles had also Visions in the Night time. *Acts 16.9.* The *Macedonian* appeared in the Night. That word which said, *that Old men should dream Dreams* was accomplished. The Apostles heard Voices from Heaven. The Lord said to St. Paul, *My Grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.* There are several instances, whereby it appears that the Holy Ghost did secretly instruct the Apostles. VVhen St. Peter was pondring upon the Vision which he had seen, the Spirit told him, *Behold three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, without doubting, for I have sent them.*

'Tis plain, that it was not the Spirit of St. Peter which is spoken of in that place. Which I add, to the end men may not think, that by the Spirit is meant a bare disposition of Piety. The Question is about a Spirit, who had sent three men to St. Peter. The same Spirit, the same Person admonish'd him to go and meet them. Sometimes also the particular inclinations of the Apostles were withstood by the inspiration of this Spirit, so true it is that it never signified the natural inclinations of their Piety. The thing is of that importance as deserves a Proof; and there needs no more for one to be satisfied, than to read the sixteenth Chapter of the *Acts*. *After they were come into Mysia, they assay'd to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.* *Acts 16.7.* A greater Force opposes the

the particular designs of St. Paul and Timothy. The Spirit of God suggested often to the Apostles what they had to do and say.

What St. Paul says to Timothy may be rank'd among the Revelations: *ὡς ἡ ἐσχάτη γενεὴ ἀβυσσῶν*. The Spirit says distinctly and in express terms, *That in the latter times some shall depart from the faith*. The Apostles, as we shall find hereafter, wrote some things wherein the Holy Ghost was no otherwise concern'd than by way of Direction; but they wrote other things which he suggested expressly to them. And such was this his foretelling the Departure which should happen in the latter times: *ὡς ἡ ἐσχάτη γενεὴ ἀβυσσῶν*.

But it is not enough to have prov'd, that the Apostles had Revelations, which may not be deny'd, without opposing the Scripture. All those who desire that Men should believe that they have any Respect for this Sacred Book, will agree upon this for a Truth. *Spinoza* himself will acknowledge it. He says, *That 'tis beyond all Controversie, that the Apostles were Prophets*. So far we are agreed.

But if we put the Question a little higher, and ask how the Apostles have couch'd in writing the Revelations which they had, we shall meet with Adversaries.

Nemo qui novum Testamentum legis dubitare potest Apostolos Prophetas fuisse. L. I. c. II. Tract. Theo-

M. N. says, that we ought to give Credit to those Revelations, because it was God who sent them immediately. That is certain, but if the Apostles have either maliciously, or for want of Memory, corrupted their Revelations, where

where shall we be then? *M. N.* answers that they were men of Probity, and that we ought to rely upon their Sincerity. They were men of Probity, 'tis true; but it must be agreed at the same time, that it was not an infallible Probity; and that it was not impossible but that they might injure the Truth. 'Tis to be agreed also that their Memory might deceive them. It is clear then, that if the Holy Ghost left them to their Infirmities, our warrants for the truth of their Revelations is not over abounding. Therefore we must of necessity admit the Guidance of the Holy Spirit.

When we seriously dive into the writings of these Gentlemen, there is a great deal of reason to suspect that they seem to have some regard for the Apostolic Revelations, only to make some show. They do not believe they do any injury to their Darling Principle, which reduces all Religion to Reason purely Natural. They know well that the number of these Revelations is not considerable. And should we oppose against them any one that annoy'd them never so little, they would from the Infirmities of the Apostles derive an argument which should bring their Revelations to the trial.

Their Concessions are exactly calculated for their Principles, specious appearances which signify little. Such is their Confession of the Infallibility of Jesus Christ. They discourse of it in pompous Terms, which however are of no great advantage.

vantage to the Christian Religion. For since he has not written any thing, all that comes onely to the infallibility of Preaching. If a Doctrine taught *viva voce* with Infallibility be intrusted to Writers that may falsifie it, 'tis evident that their Writings can be no foundation of a certain Belief. And therefore we have a priviledge to examin what they have written by the Rules of sound Judgement. And to this it is that they would reduce all Religion.

But not to speak at present of any other Revelations than what the Apostles had, 'tis seen, that though an Infallible Spirit suggested them, they lose the Prerogative of their original Infallibility, when they come once to be handled by the Apostles, in case the Holy Ghost had suffered those Revelations be obscur'd by human infirmities. I say then, that the Holy Ghost acts two ways, by relation to the truths which he hath revealed by the Apostles. First he suggested those truths which he imprinted in their Souls by some of those ways which I have set down, wherein the Apostles were in a passive disposition. like a piece of Cloth that receives the Colours. 'Tis in this manner that they were instructed; but when they set themselves to instruct others, and communicate in writing what the Holy Ghost had taught them, he acted after another manner; he push'd them forward to write, he strengthen'd and refreshed their Memories, and so directed their Pens, that they wrote nothing which was not to the

the purpose, and according to the most exact Rules of Truth. There was then in the written Revelations which they have left us, two sorts of Inspiration: Inspiration of Suggestion, and Inspiration of Direction.

C H A P. III.

Wherein is Explain'd the Nature of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament, in reference to things which the Apostles had heard and seen.

WE must acknowledge that we should expose our selves to very smart Objections in maintaining that the Holy Ghost dictated all the Words and all the Things which the Apostles wrote. The Infallibility of their VVritings does not depend upon that Hypothesis, as we shall shew hereafter. The Holy Ghost suggested to those Holy Men, the things which they knew not. But as for those things which they knew, they had need only of his Direction to render 'em infallible in their VVritings.

To the end my Notion may be the better understood, I distinguish those things which the Apostles knew by the ordinary ways of Knowledge. There were some that had a regard to ordinary Education, and others that were the Consequences of Instruction in Religion. I refer to common Education
whatever

whatever the Apostles might have learn'd from Nature and Society. There are an infinite number of Things which enter into the Minds of the most vulgar Souls, even without study, I do not pretend that the Apostles were learned and witty Men at the time they were called. 'Tis known, that unless it were *S. Paul*, whose Education had been singular; the other Apostles were very rude and unpolish'd; and they had reason to make of their Ignorance a Glorious Monument to the Holy Ghost, who with such feeble Instruments triumph'd, and caus'd the Gospel to triumph in all Places. However, this is no Hinderance, but that it must be agreed, that the Apostles had replenish'd their Minds with several things which they had learn'd without the Help of Study. They had general Ideas that are obvious to the most illiterate; and they had other Ideas with which their Profession and common Conversation furnish'd 'em.

The Instruction which they receiv'd in Religion was at two times; before, and after their Call, to the Apostleship. Before their Call, they knew as much as had been usually taught of the Jewish Religion to the common People, whether by the Exposition of Scripture, or the Rehearsal of some Traditions. After their Call, for three or four years they saw and heard what is to be read in the Gospels.

These are those things which enter'd into the Minds of the Apostles by seeing and hearing, and which have their Place in the Apostolick

Apostolick Writings. Common Knowledge furnish'd 'em with Allusions, Metaphors, Proverbs and Maxims of Wisdom. The Knowledge of Religion challenges the first Rank in Scripture: there, we see the Christian ingrafted upon the Jew, the Gospel added to the Law; the Apostles wrote concerning Christianity as People that had been Jews.

Our Business is to decide how the Holy Ghost guided the Apostles in those things which they knew by the ways already observ'd. 'Tis clear, that a new Suggestion was absolutely useless; and as we ought not at any time to have Recourse to Miracles, but in a Case of Necessity, we should violate that Maxim, by affirming, that the Holy Ghost suggested and whisper'd into the Ears of the Apostles what they knew before. He was not oblig'd to begin, but where Nature had ended: 'twas enough that he spoke, when she became silent.

Let us not imagine however that he was only a Spectator of the Functions of Nature. He brought her to perfection, and hinder'd her from going astray. In the Hands of this great Master the Faculties of the Soul receiv'd a new Degree of Strength, the Senses more faithfully admitted the Images of Objects, the Memory was refresh'd and confirm'd, and the Judgment found the way not to be deceiv'd. 'Tis my Opinion, that it cannot be deny'd, but that the Apostles found all these Advantages in the assistance of a Spirit that in a moment taught

taught 'em to speak Foreign Languages; that in Answer to their Prayers, reviv'd the dead; but (which appears to us yet more considerable for our Purpose) who made choice of the Apostles to make 'em Masters, whose Credit should be so great, as that the Faith of the People might rely upon their Testimony.

We have thus seen that the Apostles learn'd, by the assistance of their Senses, several things before they were call'd, and after they were called; those things enter'd into the Composition of the Sacred Books under the immediate Direction of the Holy Ghost. Natural Ideas, common Ideas, Ideas of their Profession; all these became serviceable as well as the Ideas of Religion.

The share which we believe the Holy Ghost had in the writing of those things, is, 1. That he was the *Primum Mobile* of that Composition; 'twas he that set the Apostles at work, whether it were in furnishing 'em with Occasions and Subjects to write upon, or whether it were by secretly stirring 'em up to write, I may say he put the Pen in their Hands. 2. He presided in the Choice of the Matter which was to be put into the Work, not suffering the Apostles to write any thing but what was true, and to the purpose. This is an Inspiration of Direction: nor does there need any more to be said, as to the *Truths* which they had heard and seen. We shall see hereafter what sort of Infallibility arises from this Direction.

CHAP. IV.

Wherein is Explain'd the Nature of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament, in reference to the Progress which the Apostles might be able to make, in reasoning upon the Truths suggested by the Holy Ghost, and upon those which they had learn'd by the way of Sense.

There are in the Writings of the Apostles several things which appear to proceed from their own Brains, and which are as it were the Additions of their Reason. This appears, both in respect to the Oracles which the Holy Ghost suggested to 'em, and in respect of those things which they had learn'd by Hearing and Seeing.

'Tis known to be the usual Custom of the Apostles, to accompany the Truths which the Spirit suggested to 'em with certain Reflections. For instance, S. Peter joyning the Vision of the Sheet, to the Vision that was seen by Cornelius, Of a truth, says he, now I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons, &c. S. Paul, after he had declared what the Spirit had said in express Terms, touching such as should depart from the Faith, makes a short Discourse upon it. S. Peter understanding by

1 Tim. 4.
1.

1 Pet. i.
12, 13, 14.

Revelation the near approach of his Death, concludes from thence; that it behov'd him to be a good Husband of his Time, and to inculcate the Truths of the Gospel into the Hearts of the Christians, in such sort that they might survive him. *Wherefore, says he, I will not be negligent to put you all in remembrance of these things, tho ye know them, and be establish'd in the present Truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this Tabernacle to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this Tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.*

When thus they reason'd upon the Oracles, the Apostles had no need of being inspired; to take the Word in a Sense of Suggestion. Their Reason, fortified and guided by the Holy Ghost, whole Instruments they were, was sufficient for them to find out in the revealed Propositions the Conclusions that were included in them. Natural Logick would have served the Turn, here we have no recourse to the Holy Ghost, but to warrant the Infallibility of the Reflection of the Apostles.

The ancient Oracles, that were clear, needed no more than the ordinary Direction of the Holy Ghost to be well understood, and to be the Foundation of Reflections and Exhortations. But it is plain, that for the apprehending certain Oracles which the Apostles apply to Christ, or to Matters of the Gospel, they stood in need of an extraordinary Assistance, which was a sort of Suggestion. 'Tis not enough to say, that many times

times the Apostles understood the Sense of Oracles, by some Tradition which, it may be, was preserved ever since the time of the Prophets. There will still remain some places of the Old Testament, in reference to which we must needs say, that the Apostles had an extraordinary Inspiration. Such, for Instance, is that which allegorizes upon Mount *Sinai* and *Agar*. Such is also that which we find in another place touching *Gal. 4th Melchisedech*. And such are several Oracles apply'd to Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost discovered upon those Occasions, what we could never have understood by the usual Keys of Scripture. The same Spirit which had inspir'd the ancient Prophets, inspir'd the Apostles to make 'em understand what was said by the Prophets. He perfectly understood his own Oracles, and all the Grammatical Cavils that can be oppos'd against the Explications which the Apostles make of the Old Testament, will never be able to carry it from the Decision of the Men of God.

The Prophets have been always look'd upon as the Interpreters of *Moses*; but as infallible Interpreters their Interpretations pass'd for new Oracles from whence there was no Appeal. In a word the Prophets are the best Commentators upon the Prophets, because they spoke by the same Spirit. Let us apply this to the Apostles, who are also, according to the Confession of *Spinoza*, the Prophets of the New Testament. They have explain'd the Old One. 'Tis by them

that the Holy Ghost unfolds the Oracles which he had formerly inspired. *Quædam* himself, with all the Liberty which he takes, cannot forbear to attribute to the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the Explanation which the Apostles make of the ancient Oracles.

Forſan etiam ad munus eorum attinebat Prophetiæ veteris Testamenti explicare, de quibus Petrus dicit, Ep. 2. c. 1. v. 20. Eas non fuiſſe illas prædicatas, ſeu privata. Explicandi, quia eodem ſpiritu afflati à quo fuerunt primum profectæ opus eſt, ad eorum Arcana enucleanda. Curcell. Tract. Eccl. c. 3. ſect. 10.

I paſs to the Evangelic Matters, of Fact of which the Apoſtles were inform'd after our Lord Jeſus Chriſt had call'd 'em. For three or four years together they receiv'd his Leſſons, and ſaw his Miracles. After what manner is it, that the Apoſtles have ſet down in writing what they learn'd during all that time? Many times they have enlarg'd their Subject, they have reaſon'd the Caſe, they have explain'd. This was done naturally under the Direction of the Holy Ghoſt, as I have already made out. But there was ſomething more; for if things had been barely preſented to their Memory, there would have been ſome which would have been enigmatical to the Apoſtles, as they were when they receiv'd 'em from the fiſt Hand. We know that at that time, they underſtood not ſeveral Parables; and how long was S. Peter before he underſtood the Calling of the Gentiles? 'Twas requiſite the Holy Ghoſt ſhould make uſe of Viſions to inſtruct that Apoſtle. 'Tis true, the Explanation was not always

always made by Visions; for the Holy Ghost, had other ways to remove their Prejudices: He opened the Understanding of his Ministers, to the end they might the better apprehend the Scriptures. After he had enlighten'd them, they enlighten'd others by the Sacred Writings, and we are assured that we are enlighten'd by the Light of the Holy Ghost when we read them.

CHAP. V.

Wherein are set down four Consequences, that arise from the manner of Explaining the manner of the Inspiration of the New Testament.

I Have shew'd that the Apostolic Writings are beholding for their Inspiration, either to the suggestion of the Holy Ghost, or to his Direction. 'Tis needless to insist any longer upon the first of these two ways: For besides that the things suggested by the Holy Ghost make the least part of the New Testament, we find that as they were at first intrusted to the memory of the Men of God, they fall at length under the way of Direction. Therefore since that is the prevailing Method, 'tis absolutely requisite that we exactly consider the nature of it. I shall give it a new Light, by asserting distinctly four Consequences that arise from the

manner which I have already explain'd.

1. The Direction of the Holy Ghost supposes that the man acts, after he has been set to work by that Infallible Master who conducts him in the way of Truth. We should deceive our selves extremely, should we believe that the Apostles in writing, were as it were insensible Pipes through which the Holy Ghost conveyed his Will. For then we ought never to say, *the Gospel of St. Matthew*, the *Epistle of St. Paul*, but the *Gospel of the Holy Ghost*, the *Epistle of the Holy Ghost*. According to that Hypothesis, the Holy Ghost would have done all, and the man would have done nothing. This is not the Idea that we ought to have of the Apostolic Writings. The Authors acted; the Faculties of the man were in motion; their Memory, their Judgement, their Will were no less in action than their hands in writing, or their Lips in dictating; but all this was done under the infallible direction of the Holy Ghost.

By what I have said, 'tis clear that we must expect to find in the Apostolic Writings, several steps of the method of Nature. The man, as it is usual for him to do, according to the common course of Study, meditates, reasons, takes advice, and by that means advances from Light to Light; seeing then that the man acts in the Apostles under the Direction of the Holy Ghost, it follows that they practis'd all this. They considered seriously what they did; and made use of their Reason. But this is not to be said of those Oracles

Oracles which the Holy Ghost suggests word for word: in that case the man is little or nothing. But it is not so in these occasions wherein the Holy Spirit acts by way of Direction; for then man acts under his Orders.

This being granted, 'tis no wonder that we meet with human manners of Speech in the Apostolic Writings. How shall a man deliver himself, if he does not speak the Language of men? Let no man then be surpriz'd to see expressions importing doubt and scruple in the writings of the Apostles. This would not be proper for God to do; for God doubts of nothing: but thus a man may do, though acting under the Directions of God; in regard that God, while he directs him, may suffer him to doubt, or let him speak after the manner of men. 'Tis known, that the Apostles have intermix'd in their Writings doubtful Expressions. *It may be, says S. Paul to the Corinthians, I will abide and winter with you.* And the same Apostle, *1 Cor. 16* to his dear Philemon, *For perhaps, says he, he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him for ever.* To this may be refer'd the manner of the Apostles counting time, they say, when instead of precisely marking the time *about that time, about six a Clock*; this is the usual Language of Men; nor would the Holy Ghost go about to reform the common Phrases of Human Speech.

2. It follows also from the same Principle, that the style of the Sacred Writers has a great affinity with their Genius and their Educa-

education. This Remark has been made a long time since upon the Style of the old Prophets. With a little consideration we may discover in the writings of the greatest part both their *Genius* and their *Profession*. The same Observation is to be made in the Apostolick Writings; wherein you may find from time to time the Character of their Authors. This is a necessary Consequence of the Principle which I have asserted, that man acted under the Direction of the Holy Ghost.

3. According to the Principle which I have laid down, there is no room for the Distinction which is usually made between words and things. Nothing is more common than to hear men say, that the Holy Ghost inspir'd the Things or the Thoughts, and left the choice of the words to the Discretion of the Apostles. I am apt to think that this Opinion is not to be maintain'd; at most it can have no other Colour, then in regard of the Oracles, which the Holy Ghost suggested or dictated to the Apostles; It may be said even in that occasion, that the Holy Ghost inspired as well the words as the things. So that the distinction is out of doors in that respect. But it is clear that it cannot be made use of upon those occasions wherein the Holy Ghost presides no otherwise than by way of Direction. The words and the things depend upon one and the same sort of Inspiration: both the one and the other proceed from the same Spring, and are guided by the same hand: they

they proceed equally from human Faculties, and are equally directed by the Spirit of God. in their power not to have obeyed.

4. All the Footsteps of human Wit which are to be found in the Apostolic VVritings, no way lessen the authority of them: they are never a jot the less Infallible, because their Authors were guided by an Infallible Spirit which directed their Composition. What imports their being written by Men, provided the Holy Ghost makes the Truth appear under the dashes of the Pen? Men, whom the Infallible was pleas'd to guide, were themselves infallible; He lets them alone when they go right, and when they are about to miscarry, he brings them back again. There needs no more to conduct them certainly to the truth, and to make them assured Conductors of others: And this will more clearly appear after we have considered where in the Infallibility, which the Apostles acquired by the Direction of the Holy Spirit, consists.

CHAP. VI.

*Wherein is consider'd the Nature of the
Infallibility which springs from the In-
fallibility of the Holy Ghost; and in par-
ticular, touching the manner how the
Apostles obey'd it.*

IN Order to the finishing my System concerning the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament, 'tis requisite that I should examin the nature of Infallibility that springs from the Direction of the Holy Ghost, for 'tis needless to assert that he directs the Authors of the New Testament, unless we know what that Direction has produc'd. 'Tis agreed that God cannot err, and that by Consequence the way which he shews us is the way of Truth. But if they whom he conducts prove Rebels to his Conduct; or if we are not capable to discern the Things wherein they are directed, or those to which they are not guided, it will not be any great matter to us whether or no, we are assur'd that the Holy Ghost was pleas'd to direct them. Therefore, to lay some foundation of Christian assurance distinguish the manner how the Apostles obey'd that Direction, and the nature of the Things wherein they were infallibly directed.

It is essential to know the manner how the Apostles obeyed the Direction. If it were in their power not to have obeyed, we have no assurance that they were directed in the Composition of the Sacred Writings, and in making the Analysis of our Faith, we shall ascend to a very dubious Point. We might put the Question to our selves; could it be impossible that the Apostles, Fishers as they were, should withdraw themselves from their Obedience in the same manner as formerly *Judas* did, when he was sent to *Nimrod*? it may be that they have not written when and how they ought to have done?

If ever this Doubt be rais'd, 'tis easie to confute it. To which purpose there are two things to be considered, the one in reference to the Apostles, the other in reference to God.

1. The Dispute does not lie as to one Apostle singly; there are twelve or thirteen, who serve to be Examiners the one of the other. For they who have wrote, and they who have not written are equally called to the trial. If among them there was any one who through a Spirit of Rebellion was not absolutely conformable to the direction of the Master, the rest would have been all in Tumult, and either would have reclaim'd or cried down the Mutineer. But when we see that all the Apostles are in a perfect Harmony as to the Apostolic Writings, and in a Union Cemented with the Blood which they have shed to seal the Truth of their Testimony, the Doubt is dispers'd;
and

and we are persuaded, that it is not possible that twelve or thirteen Witnesses, known to be people of Integrity, should concur to the steadfast maintenance of the least Lye.

2. What I have said in reference to the Apostles, receives a new Reinforcement from what I have to say in reference to God. He had engaged himself to honour the Ministry of the Apostles with Miracles, which were the attestation of Heaven. Are not the Apostles fit to be Credited, while they are supported by the Deposition of such a Testimony? As it is impossible that God should tell Lyes, there is also the same impossibility, that he should authorize a Lye. Had the Apostles refused to obey the direction of the Holy Ghost, God would have reassumed those Gifts of Miracles from 'em, which he never had granted them, but to verifie their Doctrine and their Mission. Let us conclude then from his perseverance to glorifie their Apostleship to the end of their Lives, that they inserted nothing but what was true in those Writings, where they laid up our sacred Religion, as a Trust committed to their Charge.

This Observation shews us, that in case the Apostles had gone astray, God would have made known their deviation by a Cessation of their Miracles. But it behoves us to add, that it was Gods design to prevent that starting aside. He was resolved that such and such Men should be the Ministers of his Grace throughout the Universe. Unless you will say, that God was not able to render

der them fit for this great Design (which is infinitely absurd) it must be acknowledged that he took that preventive Care that their infirmities should not turn them out of the right Path.

Peter might be guilty of Treachery without doing the least injury to this Reflexion. He lost himself at a time when our Saviour was still upon Earth. Though all the Apostles had then become Traytors, the Gospel would not have suffer'd. Jesus Christ would have chosen Ministers more faithful: But since he had cleans'd his Floor, and that he has solemnly confirm'd his Apostles by the Mission of his Spirit, let us fear nothing for his Honour to guide 'em to the Truth; and his Design, by their means to present us with the Riches of his Grace, engages him to have a strict Eye upon those Ministers; to whose Functions he has affixed the Salvation of Mankind. *If the Salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?* If the Holy Ghost suffers the Apostles to fall, all men fall with them.

Provided we consider it well, we shall find that the Apostles might not be without sin, and yet be infallible. Infirmities are as it were the Portion of Human Nature: they are to be met with in the choicest Saints; it being the pleasure of Providence to shew that they are but men. But these Infirmities are not Essentials. They are surprises from which they recover themselves after a little Recollection. What has this in Common with such faults as the Apostles might have com-

committed in their Writings which they composed in the height of serious Thought, and which they never recanted? The Infirmitie of the Apostles shewed that they were Men, but such a constant Prevarication in the most essential Duty of their Function, would have made 'em to have been worse than Devils. 'Tis therefore no true way of arguing to say, that because the Apostles were not altogether without sin, they might betray the Church by a voluntary Suppression of the Council of God.

But the grand Reason which warranted their Fidelity in the Administration of Holy Things, ought to be drawn from our Saviour's Design in the Choice which he made of the Apostles, and the Promise which render'd 'em capable of the Apostleship. The Design was by their Preaching, or by their Writing, to publish the Doctrine of the Gospel. Had they dealt treacherously in their Ministry, this Design, upon which depended the Faith of the Elect, had never been put in execution. The Promise was to guide the Apostles in all Truth. So that the supposing they might have prov'd unfaithful, involves the Lord Jesus himself in this Accusation of Infidelity. He promises that he will guide his Apostles to the Truth, that is to say, that he will make 'em faithful. So that if they cease to be faithful, he ceases to be so himself: he fails of his Word, because he does not fulfill his Promise.

To

To evade this Demonstration, they say, that provided our Saviour Jesus Christ declares and shews the Truth to his Apostles, he is not to be blam'd in the least, tho' they refuse either to follow or reach it. To which I answer two things: First, that this Promise, *The Spirit of Truth shall guide you in all Truth*, implies more than a bare shewing of the Truth. The Holy Ghost, if he design'd to be a true Conductor of the Apostles, was to guide 'em to the Mark which he set before 'em. Without which the Promise had been but a very small Comfort to 'em. They had always had this to say; If thou let us alone to our Infirmities, we shall be never the better for seeing a way, into which they shall hinder us from entering.

In the second place, there needs no more than to consider the whole Extent of the Promise, to be convinced that the fulfilling of it did not depend upon the Good Will of the Apostles. 'Tis properly the Church to which Christ Jesus promises to teach the Truth by their Ministry. Now the Promise being made to the Church, their Rebellion would not have discharged Jesus Christ of his Promise. It was absolutely necessary, that the Spirit of Truth should be Master of the Apostles Pens, and guide 'em to the Truth, to the end the Church might enjoy what was contained in the Promise.

If I said, that the Holy Ghost constrain'd the Apostles to follow his Directions, I might countenance the Word with the Opinion of
some

some of the ancient Fathers. Epiphanius is positive in this particular. He alleges that

Spiritus Sanctus
B. Lucam operatus
guibusdam Stimulis
cogit & extor. E.
piph. l. 2. Tom. 1.
Hæres. 13.

the Gospels of S. Luke and S. John were composed by a kind of violent Impulse and Constraint, which the Holy Ghost put upon those two Evangelists. He says that Saine Luke was stirr'd up and constrain'd by certain secret Influences; and that S. John wrote in delirio, i. e. himself.

Deinde Spiritus Sanctus Joannem & ceteros invitum Religione quadam & animi moderamine deficiente ad scribendum Evangelium impulit. Ibid. Sect. 12.

We also find by a Passage in the Acts, that when the Saints would have gone to one place, the Holy Ghost constrain'd em to go to another.

The Term therefore of Constraint is not too hard; but let us take it in a Sense importing a more pleasing violence. For tho the Apostles had no such Will, the Holy Ghost infus'd it into em, sometimes after one Manner, sometimes after another. When the Objects were sufficient, he let em alone to act by themselves; but when the Objects were not sufficient, he acted himself as he thought it convenient; but always so, that it was not in the power of the Apostles to write otherwise than according to his Directions.

and the Church might enjoy what was intended in the Promises which he had made. If I said that the Holy Ghost constrain'd I might I suppose I should follow his Direction to the Word with the Opinion of

G. H. A. B.

CHAP. VII.

Wherein is considered the Nature of the Infallibility which arises from the Direction of the Holy Ghost, with reference to the Things wherein the Apostles were directed, and whether they were in particular deceived in their Opinion of the near Approach of the End of the World.

TO the end we may well know in what things the Apostles were infallibly directed, there needs no more than to consider the Design of the Holy Ghost in directing 'em. This Design was, beyond all Contradiction, to make 'em Teachers, by whose Ministry the world might receive the Gospel. They were sent to establish the Doctrines of their Master. To that purpose it was, that they were instructed and guided by the Spirit of God.

There are several things in the Gospel which are usually distinguish'd. The Doctrines, and the Matters of Fact. But if this Distinction be but never so little considered, it will be found that it is a Distinction made of things which ought not so be distinguish'd. For in the Christian Religion, Matters of Fact are be-

come Doctrines, and Doctrines are in the Nature of Matters of Fact. We find, that Matters of Fact are become Doctrines; Christ was born of a Virgin, suffered and rose again; these at the same time are all Matters of Fact, and Doctrines; Jesus Christ is equal to God his Father; Jesus Christ has made an Atonement for our Sins by the Sacrifice which he offered upon the Cross: Jesus Christ promised that he would raise his faithful Disciples again in Glory. Is it not evident, that these are Doctrines in the Nature of Matters of Fact, seeing the Dispute is, whether the Apostles taught em, or rather whether our Saviour taught em to his Apostles? This is Matter of Fact, that he taught such or such Doctrine. The Distinction which I have examin'd, can have no room in reference to the Infallibility which I consider. Vainly the Apostles were directed in respect of Matters of Fact, and Doctrines; else they could never have given us the Gospel under the Direction of the Holy Ghost.

'Tis much more to the purpose to admit another Distinction between the Things which the Apostles have written; some as belonging directly to the Doctrine of the Gospel; others, as only accompanying it. 'Tis manifestly seen, that it was the Design of the Holy Ghost to direct the Apostles in reference to the First. I shall not here distinguish between things of greater Importance, and things of less Weight. That Distinction is of it self a Spring of Scriptures. That which is Important for one, is not

for another. Every one has his Balance wherein he weighs his Doctrines. There are some indeed which are not of that weight in respect of those which we take to be Fundamentals. As to that Point the Holy Ghost has given us certain Rule, but it may be evaded by subtlety. Whatever directly concerns our Religion ought to be a part of our Faith. Now we should never have any Repole in our Minds, had not the Apostles been generally directed in all those Doctrines which it behoves us to believe, as well of great as less Concernment without any Exception. For as we are no way exempted from believing what seems to us of less Importance; it is clear that in things of this Nature, as in others, that the Authority of the Apostles must have been supported by the Direction of the Holy Ghost.

There is a little more Difficulty in respect of those things which are only accidental or accessory to the Evangelic Doctrine, and which do not seem to be any part of the Constitution of our Faith. Such are Notions purely Philological, Proverbia Maxims, Quotations of Authors, the Personal and Domestic Affairs of the Apostles, or if there be any other Foreign Matters that happen to be inserted in their Writings. We shall discourse of these things in the following Chapter. I cannot rank amongst these Matters certain Things that very nearly border upon the Doctrine; as for Example, the Time of the World's Ending. Now to make it appear, how much Error in this

would be incompatible with the Direction of the Holy Ghost, there needs no more than to make the Apostles speak after this manner: In a little time you shall find by experience the Truths that we have declared to ye; the World shall suddenly be at an end, the Bodies of the Living that are among ye, shall die, and shall rise again after some years; and we shall never die.

Had the Apostles spoken after this manner, would they not have hazarded the Reputation of their Miracles and their Preaching: might not in this Case the Words of Moses have been apply'd to 'em? *When*

Deut.

22.

a Prophet speaks in the Name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the Prophet has spoken is presumptuously: then shalt not be afraid of him.

'Tis not without Cause that I have alledg'd the Example of the End of the World: for that some Authors have drawn from thence an Argument, which in my Opinion, dishonors the Infallibility of the Apostles. They have no way mistaken upon this Subject. I do not say, that they were acquainted with the last Hour: the Son of God himself, as he was the Son of Man, was ignorant of it. Infallibility does not consist in knowing every thing, but in saying nothing, but what is certainly true. So long as we either say nothing, or that we affirm nothing touching those things of which we have no Knowledge, we cannot be accus'd of Mistake. This Infallibility of the Apostles is no way

way wounded, by the Scandal thrown upon 'em in reference to the End of the World. A Reproach, grounded upon Passages ill-understood; the greatest part of which are to be explain'd of the End of the City of Jerusalem, according to the Prediction of Jesus Christ, or of the End of every Man, with whom, as to his own particular, the World is at an end, when he dies.

This suffices in answer to the Objection which is made against the Apostles, under pretence that they believ'd the End of the World was at hand. However, to strengthen this Objection, they quote several of the Ancients that were under this Mistake. But what is that to the Apostles, if what they uttered concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem, were afterwards apply'd by other Doctors to the End of the World? The Mistakes of succeeding Ages ought not to reflect upon the Apostles.

I set apart a Place wherein *Grotius*, and some others pretend, that *S. Paul* has expressly declar'd, that the World was to last but a few years: his Words are these: *For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voices of the Arch-Angels, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with 'em in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, &c.* From whence they conclude, that *S. Paul* believ'd that the End of the World was nigh at hand: but it is an easie thing to demonstrate, that this Interpretation is no way to be made out. *K 3 1.*

2 Theff. 2.
1.

S. Paul himself declares in express Terms, that he was not of that Belief; nor can we have a better Interpreter. Now we beseech ye, Brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in your first sentiments, nor be troubled, neither upon the credit of any Prophetic Spirit, nor by Word, nor by Letter, as from us, that the day of Christ is at hand. Now we may see by that Passage, whether S. Paul believ'd that the End of the World, was at hand. He denies it in express Terms, he protests that he had no such thought, and to render this Protestation more solemn, makes use of the Name of the Lord Jesus. We beseech you Brethren, &c. Does he tell the Thessalonians that he was deceived in his first Epistle to them but that being better inform'd, he had a mind to disabuse 'em? Nothing at all of any such thing; but he disowns all Epistles which affirm that the End of the World is at hand. Had we nothing more than that Protestation, it were sufficient to convince us, that S. Paul was never of that Opinion which is imputed to him.

2. The Declaration which he makes upon it, is accompanied with some Circumstances which present us with a new Demonstration. After he had removed from the Minds of the Thessalonians the Error that was crept in among 'em under his Name, he marks out the Events which are to forerun the End of the World. Let no man, says he, deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except

Verf. 3.

there came a falling away first, and that man
of sin is character'd forth soon after,
as one affecting Divine Honors, and both
performing Miracles. *Grotius* will have this to
have been accomplish'd while *S. Paul* liv'd,
in the person of *Caius Caligula*; and because
that was not sufficient to supply all that
S. Paul says touching the Man of Sin, that
Author brings in *Simon* the Magician, to
complete his System. But to give some
plausible Colour to his Conjecture, he must
have antedated several years the Second E-
pistle to the *Thessalonians*; which the Learned
Men of both Communions have all alike
dislik'd.

Besides this Consideration which is of
great moment, I add, that *Grotius* goes a-
bout to bereave *S. Paul* of sound Judgment,
in making him argue thus. The last day is
a great way off, be you assuredly convinc'd
of it: for it shall not appear till you have
seen *Caius Caligula* and *Simon Magus*. If
those Men of Sin were then just ready
to break forth into all their Impieties, as
must be granted according to *Grotius's* Sy-
steme, how could they have any share in
S. Paul's Argument, whose intention it was
to shew, that the Day of Judgment was far
remote.

S. Paul, had not seen yet all the Events,
which according to his knowledge, were
to precede the End of the World. Did
he not know that *Jerusalem* was to be
destroy'd; that the Gentiles should receive

the Gospel, and that the Jews should recover from their last Condition? Those are Truths which are dispersed up and down in S. Paul's Epistles. Had he had no other Lights but those of common Sense, he would have seen that those Events and Revolutions were not at hand, and consequently that the End of the World was not so near, before which those Revolutions were to happen.

3. In the same Chapter we meet with Expressions which are the Ground of another Argument, which is no less strong than the two former. I undertake to prove by S. Paul himself, that he neither believ'd nor taught, that the End of the World was at hand. Is it not a certain proof of this same Truth, that in the same place, where the Apostle denies the End of the World to be at hand, he engages the *Thessalonians* to persevere in the Doctrine that had been taught 'em both by Writing, and by Word of Mouth? Instead of telling 'em, I was deceiv'd in my First Epistle, but I have received New Lights about the Time that the World shall come to an End, therefore do not believe what I said: he speaks quite another Language. *Therefore Brethren,* says he, *stand fast, and hold the Traditions which ye have been taught whether by Word or our Epistle.* Is this the Style of a Man that recants?

4. The Argument which they would have S. Paul to make, by imputing to him about the near Approach of the World, drives on

to say, as he ~~thought~~ that this Apostle be-
liev'd he should not die. Then we which are
also and remain still together up together
with him in the Clouds. See. To urge home
the literal Signification of these Words, they
say, So Paul ranks himself in the Number of
those who, without seeing Death, shall be
chang'd. Now how can it be said, that he
believ'd himself exempt from Death; he
who speaks so frequently of his Death in his
Epistles. He had always Martyrdom be-
fore his Eyes. In the Acts, And now behold,
says he, I go bound in the Spirit into Jerusa-
lem; not knowing the things that shall befall me
there; saving that the Holy Ghost witnesses in
every City, that Bonds and Afflictions abide me.
But none of these things move me, neither count
I my Life dear unto my self, so that I might
finish my course with joy. The same Apostle
thus expresses himself to the Philippians, So
now Christ shall be magnified in my body, whe-
ther it be by Life or by death. For me to live is
Christ, and to die is gain. Could this be the
Language of a Man who thought he should
not die? Since then it appears, that S. Paul
knew he should die, it must be concluded,
that he never thought himself to be of the
Number of those that were personally to
be chang'd without tasting Death. This is an
Argument of S. Jerome upon this Occasion.

Philip. 1.
20.

*Nescis enim fieri potest, ut qui ad Timotheum scripserat. Ego enim jam desinor, & tempus resolutionis mea instat 2 Tim. 4. puta-
ret se sine carne perpetuum, & nunquam esse moriturum, praefer-
tim cum ad Rom. scribens eadem dixerit, & ad Cor. 2. 9. Hieron. ad
Almer. & Alexand. exponens illud Apostoli, non omnes dormiunt.*

but, *Crucian* to save *S. Paul's* Honor, or rather blazon, would fain have what *S. Paul* says in the First to the *Thessalonians*, to pass for a bare Conjecture; and puts it in the number of things *he* may say, of which *S. Paul* makes use when he speaks of some of his Journeys. 'Tis no great wonder to see, that an Apostle, following the Motion of his Reason, or his Desires, should hope to undertake those Journeys which he did not do. In that he tells no Untruth, he only speaks things as he thinks; so that while he abides and hesitates in a bare expectation under the good pleasure of God, there is nothing to be laid to his Charge. But what is there in common with these Examples, and the Mystery which *S. Paul* constantly teaches, touching the Change of those that shall be alive at the last day?

Upon this I observe two Distinctions; the one as to the Matter, the other as to the Manner. The Matter is on the one side a human Conjecture in reference to the undertaking of Journeys; on the other side, 'tis a Doctrine upon one of the greatest Revolutions in the Gospel. We understand well enough, that the Holy Ghost was no way oblig'd to hinder the Apostles from proposing their Conjectures in point of Journeys; but it is not the same thing with a Doctrine, wherein we have reason to expect the infallible Direction of the Holy Ghost.

The Second Distinction relates to the Manner; as to which, there only wants a little Attention, that they do ill in this place to alledge Conjectures which might escape *S. Paul*

in reference to Journey only in Thought, and in order to which, he positively says, *If the Lord so will.* First therefore, when he discourses of the Change of the Living, he treats of it as a Mystery. Now what shall the Apostles learn from the Holy Ghost, if not Mysteries? *Behold, I tell you a Mystery; all shall not sleep, but all shall be changed.* This is not said with an Air of Conjecture. *Behold, I tell you a Mystery: I would not, that you should be ignorant,* says he to the *Thessalonians*. This is still very affirmative. 2. We ought to observe with what great Care S. Paul handles this Mystery. *We tell you this, by the Word of the Lord.* Let 'em not say then, that this is a Conjecture sprung up in the Mind of S. Paul. He declares, that he has no share in it, but that it is a Revelation of the Lord. If it were not so, S. Paul impos'd upon the *Thessalonians*, and there is not that Sincerity in him which A.M. admits in the Apostles. The same Author also agrees, that what they declar'd to have receiv'd from the Lord, was effectually the Product of divine Revelation. It was then from that, S. Paul receiv'd what he says of the Mystery of the Change at the last day. So that Criticisms which they raise upon this Doctrine would fall upon our Lord himself, were they built upon any good Foundation.

After these Five Considerations, 'tis impossible to impute to S. Paul any Change of Opinion, in reference to the near approach of the World's End; or that he deny'd in his Second Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, what he had taught 'em in his First upon this Subject.

But

But they closely urge the manner of his expressing himself; *We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together in the Clouds.* It has manifestly appear'd by what I have already set down, that S. Paul did not believe he should abide in this World till that great Revolution he speaks of. Why then does he say, *We which are alive?* 'Tis clear, that it signifies no more, than *They among the faithful, who shall be alive at that time.* Grotius himself quotes divers Examples wherein S. Paul assumes to his own Person what he would say of others; and calls this Figure *numera, non exempla.* Consult him upon the Seventh Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*, and the Second of the *Ephesians*. Why does he not admit the same Figure in this, that S. Paul says in reference to those that shall be alive at the last Day? 'Tis say they, because there is no Occasion for this Figure, but when the Dispute is about Vices and Virtues: but 'tis plain, that S. Paul took an occasion to make another use of it, and that there is a necessity that his meaning should be so. He speaks in several places, as a Man fully convinc'd, that he should die: nevertheless in 1 *Cor.* 15. he says, *We shall not all sleep*, that is to say, we shall not all die. There is no reconciling him to himself, but by saying, that it is by a Figure, that he puts himself in the number of those that shall not die. They who duly consider his manner of speaking of the intimate Union of the Faithful, make no wonder to see him attribute to himself the Advantage which the Faithful shall receive at the last day. All the Faithful

Faithful according to the Doctrine of this Apostle make but one glorious Body under one glorious Head; whatever befalls the one, whether Good or Evil, is the Concern of the whole Body: we are Prisoners with the Prisoners; we are whatever the Faithful are; we are seated in Heaven with those who are there already; we shall live in those that shall survive at the last day. The Figure is bold, it may be for a common Style, but it naturally agrees with those Ideas of which S. Paul was full, in reference to the Union of the Faithful. By means of this Explanation, 'tis easy to see that he never thought himself exempt from death; and that what he says in the First Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, no way contradicts what he teaches in the Second. Let it then be allow'd for certain, that this Example is no Obstruction, but that this Apostle and his Colleagues were infallibly directed by the Holy Ghost. But it behoves us to return to those things that are only Concomitants of the Doctrine, and see whether the Infallibility of the Apostles went so far.

CHAP.

among these Proverbs there should be any one that it would be a hard matter to make good (which however I make it not my Business to examine) **C H A P V I I I** *Wherein is examined what influence the Direction of the Holy Ghost had over those things that were only Concomitants of the Doctrine.*

I Call Concomitants of the Doctrine certain things, which without making any part of the Evangelical Doctrine, are joind with it, nevertheless, for Illustration sake, or for some other Reason; as Proverbs, the particular affairs of the Apostles, Quotations, or if there be any thing else of the same Nature.

As for Proverbs, S. Paul cites one, to render more sensibly perspicuous what he had spoken concerning the misery of Relapses. But it is happen'd unto them according to the true Proverb, the Dog is returned to his Vomit again. Such is that moral Maxim which S. Paul Cites in the Epistle to the Corinthians, Evil Company corrupts good Manners. Now according to the Principles that I have already set down, these Passages were not inspir'd but laid by way of Direction. We are not to seek for any other Infallibility of the Proverbs quoted by the Sacred Authors, than that of Aim and Design, which consists only in the applications and Consequences. *Though among*

mong these Proverbs, there should be any one that it would be a hard matter to make good (which however I make it not my Business to examin) the Authority of the Holy Ghost would be in no danger for all that, provided the use made of it were good, and the Consequence true. That suffices to keep up the Honor of the direction of the Holy Ghost.

I speak not here of Philosophic Notions: for I do not find that the Holy Ghost permitted the Apostles to make any use of 'em; though it may be supposed that they might have learn'd some by Hearsay; and for that St. Paul had trodden the *Tarsum* and *Jerusalem*; that is to say, in the Schools where Philosophy was in request. A Spanish Author, who has diligently over-run the whole Scripture to take notice of such Passages, wherein it asserts some Physical Truth, observes nothing in the Apostolic Writings, unless it be what Saint Peter speaks of the dissolution of the Elements at the last day. But this Example, wherein it is clear that the thing in dispute is about a reveal'd Doctrine, has nothing in common with natural Philosophy, neither does it hinder us from asserting, that the Apostles religiously abstain'd from touching upon natural Questions. The Holy Ghost had no design to make them Masters of Philosophy.

We find in the Writings of the Apostles that they speak sometimes of their own particular affairs, as when S. Paul sends for his Cloak and his Parchment. Now upon those the Direction of the Holy Ghost is no farther

Vales de
Sac. Phil.

then concern'd than to take care that the Apostles write nothing indecent, and what is contrary to sound Sense. When their Pens confin'd themselves within these Bounds, he let them alone: but if it went farther, he took care to reduce it. We may expect from this direction, that when these Holy men wrote any thing concerning their own affairs, they should let nothing escape them unworthy the Gravity of the first Minister of the Gospel.

There is a little more scruple to be made in reference to Quotations, and some slight Circumstances of matters of Fact, related in the New Testament. Some think that the Apostles were sometimes mistaken in both these Cases; yet without any injury to the infallibility of things in respect of their main and most important Verity. I must acknowledge, that the Apostles might be mistaken in the Quotations of Authors, or in Circumstances of little importance; and yet that no solid argument can be drawn from thence against the Fundamental truth of their History. But I find nothing strong enough to oblige me to agree that these sorts of Errors are to be met with in the Apostolic Writings. I have great reason rather to believe that the Holy Ghost, one of whose cares it was to corroborate the Memory of the Apostles, would not suffer them to be defective in the exercise of a Faculty which he undertook to strengthen. I cannot imagin that a Spirit which had enrich'd the Apostles with such excellent Gifts, would

would abandon his Ministry upon such an occasion. Such a Defection would have been of greater Consequence than it appears to be. For though in the Opinion of men of Judgement, slight Errors are no way prejudicial to the Doctrine of the Gospel, yet considering the great variety of mens Humors and Dispositions, such slips make very untoward impressions. Let us suppose, that the Apostles in citing the Authors of the Old Testament, should have quoted *Moses* instead of *Josuah*, *David* instead of *Solomon*, or that they had made a confusion among the Names of the Prophets: Let us suppose that these Holy men had contradicted themselves in the relation of the Circumstances of all the Evangelical matters of Fact; would not this have imprinted into the *Jews* a strange Idea of the Apostles, an Idea sufficient to have utterly ruin'd the Grand design of the Gospel. Now in regard it behoves us to be convinc'd that it was the intention of the Holy Ghost to labour the propagation of the Gospel by the Ministry of the Apostles, 'tis no less evident in my Opinion that the wise Director did not relinquish them to any such disorder.

These Considerations are not well weigh'd in the minds of some Authors, no more than the Examples which they cite. On the other side *M. N.* has picked up all the Authors he could think of to support his Sentiment touching the faults of memory which he attributes to the Apostles. But all this Enquiry could produce no more than three

or four Authors, viz. St. Jerome, Erasmus, Episcopius and Capel. Upon which I shall make several Observations, that bereave M. N. of all the advantage which he reaps by the use he makes of those Authors.

I. Let us a little examin the nature of of their Testimony. We are not to reckon that of Saint Jerome; for M. N. acknowledges that that same Author contradicts himself upon this Subject. He seems indeed, says he, to disapprove this Sentiment in another place; But 'tis his Custom to accommodate himself to the Common Opinion, yet not to omit the producing his own. The testimony therefore of a man that contradicts himself ought to be of no great weight: it

Senti-
ments.
p. 261.

Vid. l. 3. in cap. 2 Matt.
v. 6. Putant Evangelistas
& Apostolos, in Allegandis
locis ver. Testam. nonnun-
quam oblivione vel infir-
mitate memoria lapsos esse:
quæ sententia Hieronimo,
quanquam immerito adscri-
be vixit solet. Hoc quippe
si semel admitteretur actum
esset de author, totius scri-
ptura.

may be here observ'd, that M. N. goes farther than the Socinians. Wolsog. Which I have cited already, justifies Saint Jerome, and at the same time declares, that the Opinion which some lay to his Charge concerning defect of Memory in the Apostles, utterly annihilates the Authority of the Scripture.

As for Erasmus I have very near the same thing to say of him that M. N. asserts in reference to S. Jerome, and what S. Jerome says of himself; that he frequently reported the Opinions of other men and not his own, in his Commentaries. In like manner, might not Erasmus when he confesses that the Apostles might be deceived for want of Memory

story in things of slight importance, speak as he had heard, and not according to his own judgment. For he acknowledges himself that he followed that very same way of Commenting upon Scripture. For, says he, *Cum viderem eam esse libertatem Commentariorum ad quam sapenumero provocat divus Hieronymus, & hoc colore causam tuetur suam, Arbitrabar multo magis idem jus mihi tribuendum in opere quod præter humiles ac pæne grammaticas quasdam Annotationes nihil profiteretur, præsertim cum semel, immo non semel, sed crebro, moneam me Annotationes scribere non Dogmata. Hieronymus aliquoties & hæreticorum recenset Opiniones, nec rejicit sententias, nec indicat Autores. Hic primum in jus trabatur, si non licet referre quid censerint alii.*

Erasm.
Apol. ad
Jacob.
Fabr.
Stapulens

Nor does it seem to me that Episcopus is more of his side than S. Jerome or Erasmus. The Passage which M. N. takes out of Episcopus is quoted only side-ways; we see no more than what favours the Sentiments of M. N. But that we may shew Episcopus with a whole Face, it behoves us to add what he adds; *Quod si cui tamen id videtur durum, ut amplectatur, si velit. interpretationes tales quæ aptissime dari possunt, ad vindicandum Scriptores sacros ab omni ignorantia & memorie lapsu, & quæ piis mentibus sufficere possunt; etsi rigidioribus ingeniis non satisfaciant. Præstat enim, rigore deposito, piam quamlibet interpretationem, licet cavillo aut difficultati alicui obnoxiam amplecti, quam Lapsum ullum etiam Levem, & qui circa rei narrata circumstantiam solum versatur admitti.* These words sufficiently make

The Holy Scriptures Inspired.

it manifest that *Episcopius* had much ado to be of *M. N.*'s Opinion. Neither does *Capel* speak more affirmatively upon this Subject. And thus you see what heed we ought to give to the Quotations that are produced against us.

2. If the Question were to be decided by Authority; *M. N.* knows well that it would not turn to his account. He acknowledges that he has a Crowd of learned men against him, whose authority he neglects. I do not believe my self, says he, obliged to submit to the Authority of a Crowd of learned Men, who do but repeat the same things over and over again, without ever having examin'd them, or without producing any Reason for what they say. Are we more oblig'd to submit to *M. N.*'s Learned men, than he to ours? Let him but only remember as to this particular, that his Learned men are reduc'd to one or two at most, and that we have all the rest of our side. So that if the Dispute were to be carried by Authority, the Contest would soon be at an end.

I must confess I would not absolutely renounce the advantage which we draw from the Consent of so many learned men; but not to insist too much upon their Testimony, I would willingly agree, that setting all Authority aside, the Question might be examin'd to the very bottom. And this is that which I have done, by shewing that there is no likelihood that the Holy Ghost ever intended to lessen the Reputation of the Apostles, by permitting them to fall into the defects

defects of Memory, though they were never so slight.

I should look upon the Objection which is drawn from Examples to be of greater force, were they well grounded. I will not here enter into a particular examination of the passages upon which the Enemies of Christianity build their Pretences, that the Apostles stumbled into Contradictions for want of memory. I shall only pick out two the most seemingly apparent Contradictions, and they shall be those that *M. N.* has mark'd out himself. The one is, that *S. Matthew*, relating the story of *Judas's* Treachery seems to mistake *Jeremy* for *Zachary*. The other relates to the manner of the Traytors death.

There is nothing to hinder us from affirming, upon occasion of these two Examples, but that it might so happen that the greatest part of the pretended Errors, which are imputed to the *Evangelists*, ought rather to be charged upon the Copyers of the Books, than upon the Apostles. The Sacred Books were originally without Blemish; and this perfection extended it self even to things of least moment. If it be said, that Providence, whose cares are constant for the substance of Religion, did afterwards permit that the Scripture should suffer by the Hands of *Amateurs* in respect of certain petty things, wherein Religion was no way concern'd, yet the work of the Holy Ghost is secur'd, and is no way liable to the difficulties we meet with in some parts of the Scriptures. The faults of Copyers

or Printers ought not to do any prejudice to the Original, which formerly was delivered forth by those Infalible Hands which the Holy Ghost directed.

But there is no need of bringing this Answer. Providence hath guarded the Holy Scripture, so that after a slight examination, the Scruples vanish. There is requisite for that, no more than such an Examen, as is necessary for Common Authors to avoid the Lashes of Criticism. And now I shall demonstrate this Truth in reference to the two Examples which I have produc'd by way of Objection. VVe don't beg here for any favour, though such a matter, wherein remoteness of Time, when several Circumstances were known, whereby the Scripture was more intelligible, and which are lost for us, would require, that we should not exercise the severity of Criticism with too much Rigor.

Matt. 27.
28.

Saint *Matthew*, relating the Story of *Judas's* Treachery, says, that the thirty pieces of Silver which the Traytor restor'd, were laid out in the purchase of a Field to bury Strangers; and adds, that then was fulfilled what was spoken by the Prophet *Jeremy*, *They took the Thirty pieces of Silver, the price of him that was valued.* Now the words are in *Zachary*, not in *Jeremy*: therefore, say they, *S. Matthew* mistook one name for another. But though the mistake be of little moment; I believe the Sacred Writer ought to be justified, and it is easie to do it in a few words.

Zach. 11.
12, 13.

There

There are several Methods that Interpreters make use of, to shew that Saint *Matthew* was not mistaken. The greatest part are very good; I shall produce those which seem to me to be the best. For brevities sake, I confine my self to some few. I begin with the learned *Lightsfoot*, who proves by the *Talmud* and by *Kinchi*, that *Jeremy* was the running Title of the rest of the Prophets in one and the same Volume. Whence it came to pass, that in the answer which the Disciples gave our Lord, *Jeremy* is the chiefest Prophet. Some say *you are John the Baptist*; Others *Eliab*; Others *Jeremy*. Which being so, all the Prophets were cited under the name of *Jeremy*. He bequeath'd his Name, as I may so say, to the whole Volume, in like manner as the Volume of the *Hagiographers* is call'd the *Psalms of David*, because that *David's* Psalms make up the first part of the Volume. So that according to this Explanation, Saint *Matthew* did but follow the common Custom, in citing the words of *Zachary* under *Jeremy's* name.

Hor. heb. in loc.

Gratius, quoted by *M. N.* to authorize the defects which he imputes to the memory of the Apostles, makes no use of this means to free Saint *Matthew* from the Scandal thrown upon him. He very judiciously observes, that Saint *Matthew* does not say that *Jeremy* wrote the words which he attributes to him. *Then was fulfilled what the Prophet Jeremy had spoken.* These words are not to be found in *Jeremy*, and consequently he never wrote 'em. He had only pronounced them, and they

were preserved by Tradition, from whence *Zachary* took them. *Cassius*, to make out his Opinion, proves that the Prophets commonly made use of the same words which other Prophets had left behind them; and that *Zachary* in particular strives to imitate *Jeremy*; so that the Jews were accustomed to say, that the Spirit of *Jeremy* was upon *Zachary*. And then according to this Exposition, Saint *Matthew* makes *Jeremy* to say no more than what he said indeed.

I shall add another, wherein still farther satisfaction may be met with, if one of the two former does not satisfy. Saint *Austin* says, that the Holy Ghost suffered the name of *Jeremy*, and not that of *Zachary* to drop upon the Evangelist's Pen; and that Saint *Matthew* was unwilling to correct himself, as being persuaded, that the design of the Holy Ghost was to shew that all the Prophets spoke by the same Spirit: *Singula esse omnium, & omnia singulorum*; all the Prophetic Writings belong'd in common to all the Prophets. But this Explanation seems to me a little too much forc'd: and therefore I could more willingly assent to another which is to be

Cum igitur ea quæ dicta sunt per Jeremiam, tam sint Zacharia quam Jeremia, & quæ sunt dicta per Zachariam, tam sint Jeremia quam Zacharia, quod opus erat ut emendaret Matthæus?

found in the same place. That the words which S. *Matthew* reports, being to be found part in *Zachary*, part in *Jeremy*, both together make a Complete Oracle, which the Evangelist might attribute to *Jeremy*, as being the more considerable of the two Prophets. To sup-
port

port this Explanation, several Examples are cited, wherein an Oracle, compos'd of words drawn from two different Prophets, is alledg'd under the name of one only. In a word, there are several Copies of the New Testament, wherein the second Vesse of the Gospel according to Saint *Mark* is thus render'd, according as it is written in the Prophet *Isaiah*, though the words are drawn from both *Isaiah* and *Malachy*. So that the Oracle of Saint *Matthew* being taken part out of *Jeremy*, part out of *Zachary*, 'tis no wonder that only one Prophet should be cited, and *Jeremy* before the other.

There is another Conjecture which Great Authors have made use of, I mean *Mede* and *Hammon*. The first has enclosed in one Epistle several scruples like to those which I examine. He says that Saint *Matthew's* intention in citing the words in question under the name of *Jeremy*, was to let us understand that the Chapter where those words are found was really written by *Jeremy*: and adds, that if we exactly consider the Contents of the nine, ten, and eleven Chapters of *Zachary*, we shall find, that they were written before the time of that Prophet. The Eleventh Chapter, which is that quoted by S. *Matthew*, foretells the destruction of the Temple, which no way agrees with *Zachary's* time, when the main Business of the Prophets was to exhort the *Jews* to rebuild the Temple. For this reason, among others, *Mede* maintains that the last Chapters of *Zachary* were written by some Prophet more ancient than he; which

L. 4. Ep.
31.

Amos
2. 70

3. 158

1192
1192
222 41

which Prophet could be no other than *Jeremy*; seeing Saint *Matthew* assures us of it, and for that we find nothing to the contrary in any part of Scripture. It would be in vain to alledge that those Chapters are join'd to the Prophecies of *Zachary*. That argument is of no greater force than if they should go about to prove that the whole Book of *Psalms* was written by *David*, or the whole Book of *Proverbs* by *Solomon*, because they go under their Names.

They must be very scrupulous that will not be satisfied with one of these Solutions: I am persuaded they will satisfy any man that is not resolv'd whatever it cost him, to maintain that Saint *Matthew* was deceiv'd. 'Tis now time therefore to pass to the second Example, which they make use of to shew, that the *Evangelists* contradicted one another for want of Memory.

Matth.
27. 5.

Saint *Matthew*, in the same place tells us, that *Judas*, after he had cast down the pieces of *Silver*, departed, and went and hang'd himself. But Saint *Luke* seems to observe that this miserable Wretch perished by another sort of death. For, says he, *And falling headlong he burst asunder, and all his Bowels gush'd out.* Now they pretend, that in this the two Sacred Authors have contradicted each other. *M. N.* loudly triumphs upon it, as if there were no answer to be given to it. *There*, says he, *is a manifest Contradiction, which the Learned in vain endeavour to reconcile.* Let us see whether it be so apparent as he would make us believe.

Senti-
ments.
p. 235.

By

By admitting the Contradiction, 'tis to be supposed, that one of the two *Evangelists*, was deficient in his memory. Must it be Saint *Matthew*? How! one of the Twelve, one of *Judas's* Colleagues, could he forget how *Judas* died? This is that which no body will presume to affirm; I should almost rather chuse to say, that the Apostles forgot what kind of death Christ Jesus died. The death of *Judas* was an Accident so considerable and so extraordinary, that they could not but remember it: will they say that Saint *Luke* was deceived? How could that be? He wrote under the Inspection of the Apostles concerning a notorious Accident. *That*, says he, *which was known to all the Inhabitants of Jerusalem*. Doubtless he had read the Gospel of Saint *Matthew*, whom he acknowledged to be a testimony of sufficient Credit. After which, would he, in common sense, have undertaken to contradict such a Testimony? By these Reflexions it appears, that it is impossible, that either of the two *Evangelists* should have been deceived. Nevertheless one says, that *Judas* hang'd himself, the other that he threw himself headlong. But easie satisfaction may be given upon this seeming Contradiction.

1. Nothing hinders the reconciling these two Ideas, by saying that *Judas* hang'd himself upon some high place, but that the Rope broke, which was the reason, that his Body falling headlong, he burst himself, and his Bowels gush'd out; this is very possible. In this the *Evangelists* agree perfectly. One says,

says, what the other says not; but they do not contradict themselves. Therefore M.N. is in the wrong to assure us with so much confidence, that it is a manifest Contradiction.

2. 'Tis known that there is a difference between hanging and strangling a mans self. *Judas* might strangle himself and yet not hang himself. *Hammelin* and other good Authors say, that upon this occasion, Grief did the Office of a Hangman, and proves by several Examples that men have been strangled with Grief, that is to say, that they were choked by intercepting the passage of the Spirits. The original Greek word *ἀνέστη* signifies no more. Let us say then, that this Accident befell *Judas* in some High place, from whence his Body falling might burst out.

3. I ought not to forget a third Opinion, according to which the word *ἀνέστη* or *strangled himself*, includes not the death of *Judas*, but barely an extreme Grief. As if a man should say, though he did not die at the same time, *I am stiff'd with Grief*, only to express a considerable degree of anguish of mind. In the Book of *Tobit*, there is an express example of it. We find the Daughter of *Raguel* so terribly griev'd with the Reproaches that were cast upon her *in ἀνέστη*, so that she thought to have strangled her self. However she did not die, as appears by the sequel of the History. Thus it was, say they, that *Judas* was surpris'd by his Grief, he did not die presently, but some days after he went

Tob. 3. 12.
vid. Ham.
in Matth.
27. 5.

went and threw himself headlong in the height of that Rage which attends people in despair. Saint *Matthew* speaks of the excessive Grief of *Judas* : Saint *Luke* of his Death : there is no contradiction. After these three Explanations, can a man with so much confidence affirm, that 'tis a manifest Contradiction which the Learned in vain endeavour to reconcile? Must he not have declar'd open War against the Sacred Writers, to call this a manifest Contradiction? I appeal to all Persons of Justice and Moderation, whether it does not appear by the manner after which the Answers are made to both Examples, that they are not sufficient to prove that the *Evangelists* contradicted themselves or were deceived, even in things of little Importance?

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Wherein it appears what ought to be the Extent of the signification of the words which the Sacred Writers have made use of in the Writings of the New Testament.

I Have distinguish'd those things which the Holy Ghost immediately suggested to the Apostles from those wherein he only presided by way of Direction. They would not make any Scruple to grant, that the signification of the Expressions dictated by the Holy Ghost are to be taken in a full sence, but 'tis pretended that there is no need of being so exact in those that may be called the product of Human Wit. *M. N.* cannot brook, there should be any search made after the Reasons why the Holy Ghost made use of one word rather than another, and maintains that it is Ridiculous; because often the Language of the Sacred Authōrs is Human, and Careless enough. The ordinary Method hath as he thinks a great affinity with the Opinion of the *Jews*, who hold it for a Maxim, that the Books of the Law are inspired even to a Letter: *There is not one Letter in the Law, say they, upon which great Mountains do not depend.* He alledges the Example of the Antecedent Imputation of the Sin

Sin of Adam, which is ground'd upon a Comparison that S. Paul makes use of. that Comparison, says he, is taken in a rigid sense, whereas it should be consider'd, that the Style of S. Paul being the Style of a man, who is not exact in his expressions, though the ground of his Arguments are to be admir'd. Now to be so nice about the full signification of all his Expressions would expose one to a world of mistakes. I am glad he acknowledges that the grounds of S. Pauls Arguments are to be admir'd. Were the Author hard put to it, I question whether he would not enervate this Confession with some distinction. But that we may examine what he says concerning those who insist too severely upon the Sacred Language of the authors of the New Testament, I think it necessary to observe two Things.

1. That by this sort of Divinity, they annihilate the use of the Sacred Books. They will make them speak whatever they think fit. Who does not plainly see, that if they can make us believe, that the Sacred Authors wrote things without exactness, there must be a door open'd for all manner of Errors? Though I set down a Truth which I might support upon words that seem clear to me, they will presently dispute it with me, because they may tell me there is no exactness in the Terms; You deceive your self by confining your thought to the meaning of the words. This is a wonderful Rampart for all manner of Heretics. Had the Holy Ghost abandon'd the Holy Writers to such a Negligence,

ligence, I should believe that his design was to have made the Scriptures a *Method* of Errors and Divisions, and not a *Discovery* of Truth.

2. That although the Style of the Sacred Authors be Human, it cannot be said to be Careless in respect of Things; we know that there are Careless Expressions which Grammar would never pardon. The Holy Ghost had no design to make the Apostles Masters of Language: his aim was only to instruct them in the Truth; provided they were made intelligible, that was sufficient. According to this supposition 'tis plain, that we ought not to take the Language of the Apostles for a Model of pure Greek; that was never the design of the Holy Ghost. But since it is certain that he made them intelligible, 'tis our Duty to receive with submission all the Truths which he has permitted the Apostles to wrap up in a common Style. The Holy Ghost has not suffered them to write any thing but what was true. 'Tis our Duty to search after what they have said, and to rely upon those Truths which they have taught us under the direction of the Holy Ghost.

To which purpose there is no necessity of admitting that all is inspired in the New Testament, to a Letter, as the *Jews* affirm concerning their Law; and that Great Mountains depend upon every Letter. By this Proverb the *Jews* mean *Inspiration* by suggestion. I have shewed that all that we read

and in the New Testament was far from being inspired after that manner, but that the greatest part was the work of the Apostles under the Direction of the Holy Ghost, who would not suffer them to fall into any Error. In this, our Divinity no way resembles that of the Jews.

We do not pretend as they do that Mountains depend upon every Letter. They make every thing to be mysterious in their Cabalistical Science. This is not our Genius: nor do we approve the Method of some Christians who turn all the Scripture into Allegories; but while we avoid that excess which would make the Ministers of the Holy Ghost to speak what they never thought, we are careful not to fall into the other extremum, viz. to reject what they both said and thought. We make a diligent search after the true meaning of the Terms which they make use of. And when we have found out their true and Genuine Sense, we submit to their Decision, as if the Holy Ghost had spoken to us. Whatever they have told us by his direction, may it not pass for the real Declaration of his Will? When I explain a Scripture compos'd by his Order and direction, to that degree of perfection as we enjoy it, I think really that I explain the Voice of the Holy Ghost.

I shall conclude this Chapter with the words of *Cassiodorus*, who declares, that it is one of the Privileges of the Apostles, that the Holy Ghost was their Guide in all Truth. So that we may confidently and

Curcel. p. 219. I Cōfess that the Holy Scriptures are
 Aded ut nos tunc testemur quod
 rumque scripturae ab ipso
 vris periculis, et
 Christo fidem exhibere
 sumus. Et p. 718. Col. 2.
 Adeoque nos absque metu
 erroris scripta ab illis velle
 Ea & approbata, tanquam
 Subarvca amplecti, & ad illa, quoniam ad nos
 mussem fidem & mores nostras componere.

CHAP. X.

Wherein some Objections are answered,
 which bear no Relation to the Inspira-
 tion of the Holy Writings.

Spinosa and M. N. have endeavoured by
 various Objections to overturn the In-
 spiration of the Sacred Books of the New
 Testament; but seeing those Authors only
 oppose a sort of Inspiration which we admit
 not, it signifies nothing to us. Now the
 main Foundation upon which M. N. builds
 his Objections, is this: *To believe in the
 first place, that the Things themselves were in-
 spired by Inspiration into the Sacred Historians,
 and afterwards the Terms wherein they are ex-
 pressed. In a word, the Sacred History was
 dictated word for word by the Holy Ghost; and
 that the Authors, whose Names are affixed to it,
 were, as it were his Secretaries, that wrote ac-*
 cording

being a *Book of the Holy Scriptures*. Therefore they do not object to, who think so of them, that they are *Books of the Holy Scriptures*, in things which it was not necessary that the Holy Ghost should signify to the Apostles. Having said the Objections, I now conclude, that I have answered away those explaining the Nature of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books. But the better to make it appear, that all these Objections can do my System no harm, I shall propose them in few Words.

I shall divide these Objections into two Classes, to the end my Answer may be the more orderly and methodical. There are some which are drawn from the Behaviour of the Apostles upon certain Occasions that have no relation to the Sacred Writings. The other are deriv'd from the Sacred Writings themselves. Those of the first Rank so far as I can remember are, That S. Paul doubts about the Admission of the Gentiles into the Christian Church. That the same Apostle dissembled with the Jews, for which he was deservedly contradicted by S. Paul. That S. Paul said of the High Priest, that he knew him not: and that at another time he divided the Opinions of his Judges by a poise of prudential Policy, which was altogether human. From all which is concluded, that they were not inspired.

It is quite out of the Subject I have in hand to insist upon these Objections; be-

cause I have only understood of all
 counsels of the Inspiration of the Sacred
 Books. The Question is, whether
 whether the Apostles were inspired as to
 every thing they said or did: my Ar-
 gument extends no farther than their Writ-
 ings; these Writings which Providence
 prepar'd for the Instructions of Christians
 in all Ages. It might be, that the Holy
 Ghost might leave the Apostles to themselves,
 upon divers Occasions, yet that could be no
 prejudice to those Writings, upon which, by
 the appointment of the Almighty, our Faith
 and Salvation depend. Nor is it impossible,
 but that the Apostles in their first Motions,
 might both say and think things which were
 not supported by the Holy Ghost.

Nor should I much oppose Divines,
 who would thereby explain what the A-
 postles said, when they heard that S. Pe-
 ter, whom they thought to be in Prison,
 was at Liberty. *It is the Angel.* There
 is no Ground for the Opinion of a
 Guardian Angel to be deduc'd from those
 Words; for besides, that the Words might
 have been spoken by some Christians in the
 same Room, who were not Apostles (which
 one would easily think upon these Words of
 the Historian, *where several were assembled
 together to pray*) besides that I say, altho it
 might be prov'd, that the Words were spoken
 by the Apostles, that should be ascribed to
 their Amazement, that would not be suffi-
 cient to support such a Belief. If at any
 time where the Apostles were not employ'd

A 2 12.
 15.

in the Functions of their Ministry, they seem to have been there in consequence of the Holy Spirit's inspiration, as what they said at Ephesus, *Quidam quidam* they were the Ministers of the Holy Spirit, as a very strong which they said; and as such they were inspired.

And it is acknowledged that the Apostles were inspired in their Preaching, but not in their Writing, which are a kind of *con-* firming Preaching. But if we compare these two kinds of Preaching, I must needs say that the Inspiration was much more perfect in the Scripture, the Word of which is personally given to Transmitters of certain Sermons, and Preaching accompanied with several Advantages which the Scripture has not.

The Dispute at present is not about Apostolick Preaching, as if it were about things which the Apostles when alive did when they were not employed in the Functions of their Ministry. So that all the Objections which are drawn from thence, as they concern the Question which was then in hand, I mean the Inspiration of the Sacred Writings. Yet something must be said to these Objections for fear we should think they are unanswerable. It is said, that *S. Peter* doubted for some time concerning the Admission of the Gentiles into the Christian Church, and they conclude from thence, that he was not inspired. Now if we should maintain that

Convincimus itaque Apostolos ea quæ scripserunt ex singulari inspiratione habuisse, & si quis hæc confirmaverit. Spin. Tract. Theol. Polit. c. 11.

the Inspiration of the Apostles was infused in of a sudden, and that upon the Feast of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost declared to em all those Truths which they were to promulgate, the Objection might be of some force. But since we only say, that the Holy Ghost instructed the Apostles by degrees, and according as he found it expedient, there is nothing solid in the Objection.

Nor does S. Paul's dissembling with the Jews do any prejudice to what we have said concerning the Inspiration of the Apostles. We pretend not by any means to assert em infallible in their Discourses; they were not exempted from human Frailties and Weaknesses. And it was one of S. Paul's Infirmities to comply so far with the Jews, as to break off his Communication with the Gentiles. In so doing he gave a Proof of his Weakness, but we do not find that he erred at the same time in point of Doctrine.

We see that those two Examples have no manner of Affinity with the Inspiration of the Sacred Writings. I am doubtd of the Calling of the Gentiles, but we find that Doubt rectified in the Acts. S. Paul was more indulgent in complying with the Jews than he ought to have been; but we see his Compliance corrected in Scripture. What Harm is all this to the Inspiration of the Holy Writings? Were there any Weight in these Examples, they would be against Spinoza, who admits in the Preaching of the Apostles an Infallibility, which he denies to be in their Writings. I speak wholly and solely of the Sacred

Sacred Writings, so that there is no necessity for me to trouble my self with answering Objections, wherein they are not in the least concerned or mov'd.

However, it behoves me in a few Words to say something to what is objected against S. Paul, who desirous to exalt himself for having said, *The Lord shall strike thee, painted wall*, saith, *That he did not know him to be the High Priest*. We are something concern'd to answer this Objection, because S. Paul spoke in that manner before a Tribunal, that is to say, upon such an Occasion, wherein our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ had promis'd 'em expressly the Succour of his Spirit. Never trouble your selves for what you are to say, *The Holy Ghost shall teach you, in that hour, those things which you ought to say*. Now being convinced, that Jesus Christ is faithful in all his Promises, I have reason to believe, that the Answer given by S. Paul, was by the Direction of the Holy Ghost. Some say, that S. Paul declar'd, that he knew not the High Priest, in the person of a violent Man, who had degraded himself by a cruel Order, and was no longer High Priest in the Opinion of S. Paul. Others believe, that at the time when the High Priesthood was purchased with Money, the Apostle had reason to say, that the person who purchas'd the Dignity, was no High Priest, because he was not advanc'd by a lawful Ordination. But not to insist upon these Niceties, in my Opinion there needs no more to be said, but that S. Paul did not

really know that one person or whether spoke, was the High Priest. Such an Accident might happen either through a dazzling of the light, occasion'd by a Transpiration of Passion, or because it might be some new Face unknown to S. Paul (a thing at that time no way improbable, when the Changes of the High Priesthood were so frequent) or because the Crown being very great, S. Paul could not perceive that it was the High Priest. It will be said, perhaps, that these Answers are not satisfactory to justify a person inspired, it being certain, that the Holy Ghost should not but perfectly know the High Priest. But we must have a strange Idea of the Inspiration of the Apostles to take this Objection. The Holy Ghost did not tell 'em all what he knew: many times he let 'em alone to speak to their natural Genius prompted 'em, and in their own Idiom: and thus it was that S. Paul expressed himself when he said, that he knew not the High Priest. Could they prove, that in so saying S. Paul spoke not what was true, there might be some Ground for the Objection; for such an untruth is incompatible with that Direction, which guided the Apostle in presence of his Judges. But if he spoke Truth, his Answer no way destroys his Inspiration.

In the same Chapter they raise another Objection drawn from hence, that it seem'd to be a Sleight of human Prudence in S. Paul, to divide his Judges, by declaring that he was brought before 'em for only asserting the Resurrection. Is it not certain, that the Resurrection

invented was really one of the principal points in Religion, for which he was persecuted. He insisted so much upon that point, that he preached an *Alms*, that several of his Auditors cried out, *He seems to be a Teacher of Separation*. *He says he preaches to the poor, and the Rich.* In the Twenty Fifth Chapter of First to the *Corinthians*, he reduces the whole Christian Religion to the Resurrection of one that died; I mean our Lord Jesus Christ. Well therefore might the persecuted Apostle be permitted to say, that he was brought before em for the Resurrection. In so saying, he asserted nothing but the Truth. By stating the Emposition in proper fashion he delivered himself from Perfection, and that Peace or Dexterity look a like an Article of human Prudence. Are the Saints then forbid to be prudent? Quite the contrary. Jesus Christ commands em to be prudent and wise. The Foundation of the Objection is, that human Prudence and Inspiration are incompatible. Which is evidently false in both sorts of Inspiration which I have asserted. In the Inspiration of Suggestion is it a thing, that no way becomes the Holy Ghost to inspire Men with Expedients that human Wisdom would approve. There is no doubt to be made, but that the celebrated Expedition of *Gideon* was according to the Design which the Spirit of God revealed to him. It was preceded by a Stratagem which every Body knows; that Three hundred chosen Men took each of 'em a Trumper,

Act. 17.
18.

and a Lamp inclosed in an Earthen Pitcher. When the Signal was given, every Man sounded his Trumpet, and brake his Pitcher; and upon that sudden and unexpected Noise, and the sight of so many Lights, a panick Terror seiz'd the *Meditants*. Will any one presume to say, that this was not from God? Or that there was something too much of human Prudence in the Stratagem? I made choice of this Example among several others; and it is sufficient to shew, that it is not a thing unworthy of the Holy Ghost to suggest to those whom he inspires, Designs which human Prudence would allow. And this Objection is yet of less Force, in reference to the Inspiration of Direction. For this sort of Inspiration leaving the Man to act alone in the Apostle, whom the Holy Ghost is contented to direct, 'tis no wonder, that *S. Paul*, tho inspired, should give us some Proof of his human Prudence.

It is evident by my Answer to these Objections, that if I said, that they no way concern'd the Inspiration of the Holy Writings, it was not because they seem'd to be unanswerable. My Design in this Discourse was only to defend that Inspiration, and in pursuance of it was not my Business to meddle with any thing more than the resolving and confuting such Objections as directly oppose it.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XL.

Wherein some Objections are Answered,
which are directly made against the
Sacred Books of the New Testament.

MY second Answer to these sorts of
Objections is, that there is not any
one which injures in the least the manner of
my explaining the Inspiration of the Sacred
Books. Had I asserted that they were dicta-
ted word for word by the Holy Ghost, I
should have been troubled to answer several
Objections; but affirming as I have done,
that the greatest part of the New Testament
is not the Work of the Holy Ghost, any far-
ther than as it was written under his Direc-
tion by Men, whose Faculties he let loose to
act of themselves, and guided them; I do
not see that any Objection can be made a-
gainst it; but what must be built upon a lan-
guage Foundation. This has already appear'd by several Ob-
jections which I have answered by the by,
as they offer'd themselves. But now I shall
make no scruple to collect together all that
Spinoza and *de N.* have propos'd to counte-
rmine their Opinion. And it will be seen,
that there needs no more than to apply my
Principles, to put off these vain Appear-
ances.

It is said, that the Apostles do not speak good Greek; that they themselves acknowledge, that they speak upon the Credit of their Senses; that many times they contradict one another; that they make use of doubtful Expressions; and that their Words had been inspired, Providence would have been more careful of 'em. This in few Words is the whole that is objected against the Inspiration of the Sacred Writings. If any one believes that the Holy Ghost forgot an word for word, as he does him to consider how to correct such Mistakes. For my part, I am not yet come out from upon the Principle which I have laid down. Let us run on over our first Work.

The Apostles were not Masters of all the Purty of the Language wherein they wrote. What harm does this do to Inspiration, according to the manner after which I have explained it? It is well known, that the Holy Ghost could have made 'em speak more exactly than they did at Athens. But he did not do it, therefore he did not assist 'em to speak as they did: what's the Consequence? They are assur'd, that the Apostles spoke not Foreign Languages to the height of Perfection. Who will from thence conclude, that they did not learn 'em from the Holy Ghost? His Design was to facilitate the spreading of the Gospel by the Ministry of the Apostles: provided they could understand how to do that, it was sufficient. It was not his Design to make 'em infallible Grammarians. Their Slips in Grammar are
but

inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and that the style of the Apostles is much better, than what they naturally had; and that that same degree of Perfection proceeded from the Holy Ghost. But though he should have let them speak plainly, that could be no ground for any scruple against the inspiration of the Sacred Writings. If their Authors, while they continued several years against Grammar, wrote the truth exactly; I desire no other advantage to save the Reputation of my System. The Holy Ghost it was who guided the Apostles in all Truth. This is sufficient: Truth is the principal Ornament of the Sacred Writings.

It were to be wish'd, say some, that for a farther proof of the inspiration of the Sacred Authors of the New Testament, they had declared that they were no more than the Secretaries of the Holy Ghost, and that like the ancient Prophets, they had told us, *The word of the Lord hath spoken*. But instead of that, tis said, that they appeal to the testimony of Sense; they declare that they have seen and heard, and that they arriv'd to the knowledge of things by good and authentic Testimonies I have already answer'd this Objection. I shall say no more at present, but that it opposes only the inspiration of suggestion. We need not have any recourse to Miracles but in case of necessity. Now there was no necessity that the Holy Ghost should suggest and dictate those

1. Part.
c. 13.

those things which were already known by ordinary means, there is no more to be admitted than a direction, by means of which the Sacred Writers wrote exactly those things which it behov'd them to write, and after such a manner as they were bound to write them.

They argue, they deliberate; therefore they are not inspir'd. This is Spinoza's great Argument. He maintains, that there is no

*Apostoli namque ubique
ratiocinantur, ita ut non
prophetare, sed disputare vi-
deantur. Prophetæ contra,
mera tantum, dogmata &
decreta continent; quia in
iis Deus quasi loquens in-
troductur; qui non ratio-
cinatur, sed ex absoluto sue
nature imperio decernit.
Et etiam quia Prophetæ au-
thoritas ratiocinari non po-
tuit, &c. c. 11. l. 1. Tract.
Theolog.*

difference between the Pro-
phet and the Apostles, that
the one never argu'd, whereas
the Writings of the latter
are full of Arguments.
Whence he concludes, that
by the Prophet God speaks
like a Lord and Master,
without debating himself to
argue with his Creatures;
and that the Apostles speak
like Men who submit their
Ministry to the Examination

of their Hearers and their Readers.

I do not believe that a more daring and
rash assertion could be laid down than this.
It visibly shews that Spinoza was a man who
car'd not what he said right or wrong, to
support his impious Conclusions. How could
he be so bold as to affirm that God and the
Prophets never argu'd with men. All the
Old Testament is full of Proofs to the con-
trary. Was it not by way of reasoning the
case that God said to Cain, *Why art thou
wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If
thou*

a Prophet, *Isaiah*. Could any man have
 ever read the *Scriptures*, and be so much
 that he great a *Prophet*, as to say, *Isaiah*. All
 his Exhortations are full of *Exhortations*. *Isaiah*
 in *Isaiah* sometimes speaks upon the *Old* Testa-
 ment, sometimes upon *Isaiah* *Isaiah*, and
 sometimes upon *Isaiah* *Isaiah* *Isaiah*. Among the
Isaiah. *Isaiah* to say that the *Isaiah*
 Spirit never speaks, is either to *Isaiah* *Isaiah*
Isaiah of the *Isaiah* which they pretend to
 pay him, or else to be ambitious of speaking
 these things which are altogether con-
 trary to truth.

Quite the contrary, 'tis evident, consider-
 ing the manner how God, is used to con-
 verse with men, that it was his pleasure to
 use those like rational Creatures, and con-
 vince them by requiring their Obedience.
 When he produc'd the Light, which made
 all Bodies visible, he never dispos'd the mat-
 ter but with a commanding Voice. *Let there
 be light*, said He. 'Tis not the same thing
 with the Light of Conversion. God makes
 use of Argument in the Creation of that new
 Light.

This is the course I might have held in
 framing my answer, had I affirm'd that the
 Holy Spirit suggested to the Apostles what
 they wrote. But there was no need for me to
 enter into a discussion; for me, who assert
 that the Apostles were commonly no other-
 wise inspir'd than by the way of Direction.
 Their Reason acted under the infallible Gui-
 dance of the Holy Ghost.

From

From what is said above, it is apparent, that what is asserted is not to be taken to what is objected. Concerning the various expressions which the Holy Scriptures make use of. For this is one of those objections which M. N. alleges to refute the Inspiration of the Sacred Writings of the New Testament. The *Evangelist*, says he, when they mention a certain time, never determine it exactly, because they knew it not so precisely, that they could fix the number of the Days and Months. We find in several places, about a certain Time, or about such a Number. What is concluded from thence? That the History was not dictated immediately by the Holy Ghost, who knew exactly the Number and Time that was in question. This is true, and therefore I do not affirm that the Holy Ghost immediately dictated the Apostolic History, like an Author from whose lips an *Amicus* writes whatever he dictates. According to that Principle which I have laid down, the Sacred History was written under the Direction of the Holy Ghost; which was no hindrance, but that the Apostles might speak after their usual manner. He did not acquaint them with all that he knew.

Senti-
ments.
p. 2, 6.

There is one Objection rais'd against the Inspiration of the Sacred Writers, that they often stumble into Contradictions. But this is more than they can ever prove. It may be easily shewn, that the one relates some Circumstances which the other omits. But this is only Variety; no Contradiction: In Contradiction one of the two extremes must be

be false, which was a roll carriage that needs be
 believ'd by all the Apostles. But in Varieties
 there is not so much as the shadow of an
 untruth. If two men relate the same story,
 the one may forget some Circumstances
 which may be recited by the other, and yet
 neither the one nor the other be guilty of
 Falshood. Without question Varieties of this
 nature are to be found in the Gospel. If
 they will maintain that there are any real
 Contradictions in them, that is what it be-
 hoves them to prove. But I have already
 made it out, in my Animadversions upon the
 History of Judas, that there is no solid
 ground for the most seeming Contradicti-
 ons that are to be found in the Gospel.

M. N. insists upon this, that God has per-
 mitted different readings in various parts of
 the Scripture, and they from thence alledge,
 that Providence would have been more care-
 ful of the words, had they been inspir'd. But
 do they not know, that the Prophets also
 have their various Readings, notwithstand-
 ing all the Nicety, and diligent care of the
 Synagogue? If there be any thing which
 proceeded from the Mouth of God, it is his
 own Name. Nevertheless, 'tis well known
 that the true manner of pronouncing it is
 quite lost. I know not what Opinion *M. N.*
 has of the Terms which Jesus Christ makes
 use of in his Exhortations: though they were
 inspir'd, no body will deny that some of
 them were lost, and that those which are
 left are expos'd to the variety of Reading.
 By which it evidently appears, that what is
 objected

objected in reference to the Variety of Readings, no way prejudiceth the first inspiration of the Sacred Writings. Nor can we find how they should be censured, in the least, by saying, that God permitted the words of the Apostles made use of under the direction of the Holy Ghost, in process of time to suffer some slight alteration, through the presumption or carelessness of the Transcribers. This is no hindrance but that the Apostles might be Infallible according to the Promise which Jesus Christ had made them; their mistakes would otherwise be a disgrace to the Holy Ghost who took upon him to guide them in the Functions of their Apostleship.

Lastly, 'tis observed that St. Paul makes a distinction, between his own thought, and the express direction of Jesus Christ. Thus when he speaks of the indissoluble Tie of Marriage in general, *But for these that are* 1 Cor. 7.
marry'd, I command, yet not I, but the Lord. 110.
 But when the Question is about a particular Fact, upon which he gives his Opinion according to the wisdom which God had infused into him, he makes use of this Expression, *But to the rest speak I, not the Lord.* Whence they conclude, that many times St. Paul speaks as a wise Man, and that all his words are not to be look'd upon as the words of the Lord. There needs no more than to answer in one word, that St. Paul distinguishes between the directions which our Lord Jesus Christ gave when he was upon Earth, and those which he gave by the Ministry of his Apostles. Jesus Christ declared

Marriage to be a Tie not to be dissolv'd, as is apparent in the Gospel. Afterwards upon a particular case among the *Corinthians*, Saint Paul gives his Opinion: this was the foundation of these expressions; *I command, yet not I, but the Lord*. This Distinction perfectly agrees with the System which I have made out. It supposes, that the Apostles frequently spoke, argu'd, advis'd, exhorted according to their own Prudence, but under the infallible Direction of the Holy Ghost. Thence it comes to pass that *S. Paul*, after he has decided several Cases in the Chapter whence the Objection is taken, declares, that it was by the Spirit of God that he made those Revelations: *And I think also, that I have the Spirit of God*.

I do not believe that I have omitted any material Objection; but if there be any that slipped out, it will be an easie matter to resolve it, when once the Reader becomes never so little the Master of that Principle which I think I have very clearly made out.

T H E E N D.



THE
INSPIRATION
OF THE

New Testament

Asserted and Explain'd.

IN
ANSWER
TO SOME
MODERN WRITERS

By C. G. LAMOTHE,

DIVINE

LONDON,

Printed for Tho. Bennet, at the Half-
Moon in S. Paul's Church-Yard. 1694.



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THE

INSPIRATION

TO THE

CONSTITUTION



THE
LIBRARY
OF THE
CONSTITUTION

CHAPTER

1872:02

THE LIBRARY OF THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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THE PREFACE.

THET who have a Reverence for the Holy Scripture will never be offended to see the number of the Champions of it encrease. 'Tis known that in the Primitive Ages, when Religion was continually attacked, the Church was never distressed at the Apologies which the Christians so frequently set forth. All those that knew how to write, made it a part of their Duty to uphold Christianity. And there is no question but that this was one of the most Potent means that Providence made use of, to advance the Triumphs of the Religion of Jesus Christ. We are in an Age wherein the Scripture is dishonoured, sometimes after one manner, sometimes after another: So that I cannot believe when Libertinism exerts it self so boldly, that Christians will grow weary of seeing the Number of Apologists increase, who take upon them to defend that Scripture which made them Christians.

The Preface.

We dare not presume to say, that all who have shaken the Authority of Scripture were profest Libertines, in regard that some Persons of worth have upheld Propositions, which being carry'd a little too far, do great mischief to that Book, for which in other respects they declare that they have an esteem even to Veneration. 'Tis not possible to dive into the secret intentions of Authors, so as to know whether it be out of Impudence, or through a hankering after Libertinism, that they suffer these bold and dangerous streaks to escape their Pens. The Libertine counterfeits himself sometimes to be Orthodox, and a lover of Truth; and he proposes his doubts with a seeming Ingenuity, and vigorously asserts the Truth for fear of being suspected. Sometimes also a faithful disciple of the Truth expresses himself in a feeble and trembling manner; and by his doubts and scruples gives an advantage to his Enemies. God alone knows the bottom of the Heart, and it is our Duty to leave it to him to decide the intentions of Authors, and to endeavour to defend the Truth against all manner of Offsets, on what side soever they are made.

There

There appear'd within these few Tears a certain Treatise which attack'd the inspiration of the Sacred Scripture. I shall not go about to inform my self of the real Design which the Author had in composing a Work so injurious to Scripture; but I thought it necessary to prevent the evil Consequences of such a dangerous Book. Monsieur Wittius of Holland, and Mr. Lowth, a Divine of Oxford, Father Simon, and Father Le Vassour have set forth Answers to it which I have read. But in regard it was their only Design to trace their Adversary step by step, and not to handle this matter thoroughly; there is therefore still room left for a new management of it. The English Divines indeed in my Opinion has gone somewhat farther than the rest; but I shall take the liberty to say, that he might have built the Inspiration of the Holy Writings upon better foundations: that he has not so sufficiently explained the nature of it as he might have done, and that he has ventur'd to advance some things, which in my judgement, need a great deal of softning. I hope he will be pleas'd to pardon me the Expressions, without which I could not be able to justify my De-

The Preface.

sign of writing after him. In his Preface he acknowledges that the matter is nice and new; and after he has besought the Readers not to censure him, as if he intended to betray the cause which he defends, he invites them to uphold it themselves. According to this Invitation, I shall make some steps in order to it. If my Example should excite some other more Learned Pen to write upon the same Subject, the Publick will be oblig'd to me for it. I shall be well satisfied with my weak endeavours, provided they may give occasion to the publishing any Treatise, that shall maintain the Inspiration of the Holy Writings, as effectually as the truth of them hath been asserted.

It will be found that I have tied myself to consider only the Writings of the New Testament: there was no meddling with the Books of the Old Testament, without cutting out too much work for my self; in a time when the Public receives not well any but small Treatises, especially in matter of Divinity. Therefore, that I might accommodate my self to the Palate of the Age, I was enforc'd to shorten my Subject. After I had taken this Resolution, it was no difficult thing for
me

me to chuse which of the two Parts of Scripture it behov'd me to handle: So that I determin'd in favour of the New Testament; as being that Part upon which there has least been said. We have several Books in defence of the Inspiration of the Prophets and their Writings, because they have been so often attack'd. But the Writers of the New Testament having peaceably enjoy'd the Honour pay'd them by the uninterrupted belief of their Inspiration, Authors have not made it so much their Business to examine the nature of it; or if any Libertine has attempted to contest it with them, they have altogether relied upon the belief which the Church has had of it from time to time.

Besides this I may say, that by maintaining the New Testament I defend the Old: The Apostles have given such honourable Testimonials of the Writings of the Prophets, that no Man can better maintain their honour than by demonstrating that Men inspir'd by the Holy Ghost, have given Testimony to them.

But the chief Reason which made me chuse to defend the Writings of the New Testament is this; because it is

properly the Book that makes us Christians. It is our Duty indeed to read the Writings of the Prophets: there are to be seen those Oracles, the Accomplishment of which is of glorious Consequence to the Gospel; there we are inform'd of a great number of Actions, wherein God appears magnificent in his Works; and thence may be drawn Instructions effectual for the Sanctification of the Heart: all these things were written for our Instruction: but still a Christian must chiefly repair to the Writings of the New Covenant: there it is, that he ought to be most intent and steadfast: from thence it is, that he is chiefly oblig'd to receive his Faith and his Instructions, in order to put himself into a state of Salvation. The New Testament is that Book which God deliver'd as a Legacy to Mankind, in these later times. 'Tis our Duty to cherish, as much as in us lies, the Respect which is due to that Sacred Book; and to prevent it from being reckon'd in the Catalogue of Common Writings; for fear the Religion which it teaches us, should be look'd upon as a Piece of Human Invention.

THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES
Inspir'd, &c.

CHAP. I.

*The State and Importance of the
Question, and Division of the Work.*

IT being my design to treat of the In-
spiration of the Sacred Books of the
New Testament, I cannot forbear ex-
actly to set down the state of the Que-
stion. Which being done, it will be
found that all my Arguments aim at the
same Mark; and that I have made it my
business not to amuse my Reader with
any unprofitable Digression.

In the first place then, the Reader is
to be admonish'd that the Dispute is not
here, which are Canonical Books, and
which Apocryphal. We suppose that
those with whom we Contend, agree
that there is no contradiction to be made
against the Canonical Authority of the
New Testament, according as we enjoy
it at this day; but that those Sacred Books
were actually written or dictated by the

Authors, whose Names are affixed to 'em. 'Tis agreed that these Holy Men both saw and heard the matters of Fact which they relate, and which they have written with extraordinary Fidelity and Sincerity. Which being granted, the Work begun is already in so great a forwardness, that there is no need at all of entering into the discussion of several Difficulties which concern the Question relating to the Apocryphal Books. By this means also we are freed from the trouble of proving that the Sacred Books were written by Men who were Witnesses of all the matters of Fact which are contain'd in the History of Jesus Christ, or who themselves wrought great Miracles, by which it appear'd that their Mission was Celestial. In a word, we are agreed upon the truth of these Books; so that nothing remains farther to be known, but whither they are inspir'd. The Verity and the Inspiration make two different *Questions*, of which the first is decided: the Sacred Books of the New Testament are stedfastly and undeniably true; at least so far as concerns Essential Things. The main dispute is, whether they are inspir'd or no? So that there are some who let 'em alone with the Honour of being true, but ravish from them that of Inspiration. 'Tis against these Innovators that I undertake the defence of the New Testament, of which I maintain'd

tain'd alike, and equally assert both the Inspiration and the Truth, even to the meanest Circumstances.

I could wish with all my heart, that I might be able to handle this Question without chusing any certain Adversary. My aim was to examine this important Matter, without having any particular Author in view. But I found that the Error which I oppose, is so little known, that if they did not see it supported by some one or other, Men would believe I broached some Chimera of my own, for the exercise of my Fancy. Besides, that the State of a Question is never better understood, then when it is taken out of some Book, wherein it has been already discuss'd.

First of all, *M. N.* Author of a Treatise published in *Holland*, presented himself to my thoughts. I know no body that has more formally assail'd the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament. *Spinoza* led the way of the same Undertaking; but there was little heed given to that Author, because all Men knew he had no Religion; and that moreover the obscurity and negligence that appear in all his Works, have rendered them less formidable; for that such Adversaries are not much to be fear'd. But *M. N.* has given a more subtle and more dangerous Air to *Spinoza's* Notions and has digested them into a System, of which

P. 281.
Senti-
ments of
some Di-
vines, &c.

which I shall quote a brief Abstract, as near as I can, in his own words. I begin, says he, with the New Testament, which is the principal foundation of our Faith.

1. Jesus Christ was absolutely infallible; it behoves us blindly to believe whatever he tells us, because he said it; and for that God gave us his Testimony, that he said nothing but the Truth.

2. In regard we have no Writings that ever Jesus Christ himself wrote, we ought to believe what his Apostles have deliver'd to us concerning his Life and Doctrine, because God has given us his Testimonial of of them by means of the Miracles which he wrought in their Favour, and for that they have seal'd the Truth with their own Blood. It might be that in some Circumstance of little Importance, they might relate some things not altogether so exactly as they pass; but there is no reason that they should agree precisely in every thing to the minutest Tittle.

282. Ibid. 3. It behoves us to distinguish two Things in the Epistles of the Disciples of Jesus Christ: there are the same Doctrines there, which we find in the Evangelists; and the Apostles frequently assure us that they learn them from Jesus Christ. There are others which the Apostles utter of their own Heads, or which they infer from the Old Testament by divers Consequences. We must believe the first for the same reason, that we ought to admit the Gospels; that is to say, because
of

of the Authority of Christ, who preached them to the Jews. We must admit the Second, because they contain nothing but what is most conformable to the Doctrines of Jesus Christ, or which is not founded upon good sense. We must also observe, that in regard they had no extraordinary Inspiration to write their Epistles, they intermix several things that relate to their own Designs, and their particular Affairs, wherein it becometh us to be careful how we search for Mysteries. Such are the Salutations at the end of the Epistles; St. Paul's Order to Timothy to take Mark along with him in his return to him: the Advice which he gave him to drink Wine sparingly for his Stomach's sake, and by reason of his frequent Distempers.

4. There are several Prophecies scatter'd up and down in these Epistles, and the Apocalypse is absolutely Prophetical. It becometh us to give Credit to these Revelations, because it was God who sent them immediately to his Apostles. It is also easie to distinguish some other Things, which the Apostles never propounded but only as Conjectures.

After M. N has Epitomiz'd his System, he believes he has levell'd the way to Heaven, and insults over our Divines, in saying, That it seems evident, that in regard the new Opinions introduced into Religion since the death of the Apostles, are not to be maintain'd; instead of being advantageous to the Christian Religion, they are extremely prejudicial to it. There is
that

that Inspiration attributed to the Apostles, which they never pretended to have, and of which there is not any footstep to be seen in their Writings.

This is only an applauding of himself: but I hope, the Author will meet with but few Men that judge as he does, of his new Theology. For so far is it from being advantageous to Christianity, that it is evident, and very evident too, that it sets it upon the brink of a Precipice. We understand from a Friend of M. N's, that this pretended Discovery has been look'd upon by several, as a * Step that leads directly to *Deism*; and the Author likewise is accus'd of favouring that abominable Opinion.

* Defence
of the
Senti-
ments,
&c.
P. 218.

'Tis not for me to judge of Monsieur N's Intention; I know not whether he inclines toward *Deism* or no; besides that I am willing to believe he does not; for why should I attribute to an Author a Sentiment which he seems to detest; especially when a man is brought in question who conceals himself, and who is not exactly known but only by venting his Opinions among us. I keep close to his Writing. That gives me sufficient reason to say, that if he be not a *Deist*, he has done the *Deists* a very great kindness, as also all those Libertines that could wish there were no Christian Religion at all. They find very near what they look for in the New System, which delivers them

out

out of several streights, and which reduces Christianity to nothing, or within a little of nothing. Is not this to favour *Deism*?

Since I am now upon the Point of the weight of this new Religion, the Vanity of which I shall in the Series of this Discourse endeavour to shew; I must needs say, that a man may observe how that this new Religion allows the Christians almost nothing of Inspir'd: It supposes indeed that Jesus Christ was infallible; but that signifies little, because Jesus Christ does not speak to us either *viva voce*, or in writing. We must have recourse to the Evangelists who were persons of Credit, and who have faithfully related to us what they both saw and heard. Some Body perhaps will add, that they have been good men who have left behind them in their Histories several marks of their Simplicity; their Logick was false, they had not very good Memories, notwithstanding all their Sincerity, so that they have assuredly but marr'd the Doctrine of their Master. We must acknowledge that these Suppositions which agree very well with *M. N's* System, create very great Scruples about the Gospels. Besides, they open a passage for several Niceties, that may be very inconvenient for Christians that are desirous to ground their Faith upon that part of the New Testament.

What

What say they of those other Writings which Providence has joyn'd to the Gospels? They are Works entirely Human, except the Apocalyps, to which they pay the Honour of Believing that it is absolutely Prophetic. In the other Books they also discern some glimmerings of Light, some Prophetic Flights. Were it not for that, they are to be look'd upon as no other than little Books of Devotion, or as short Commentaries upon the Gospel, in the Composition of which, the Holy Ghost never in any manner of way concern'd himself. When men are arriv'd at such a Point, as to put aside the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, *S. James*, *S. Peter*, *S. John*, and *S. Jude* must be look'd upon as Doctors that only explain Religion as well as they can: they must be only simple Artists who, without Education or Learning, took all their Instruction from their Piety, after they had run through a slender Course in Theology with *Jesus Christ*. As for *S. Paul*, who had something a better Education than the rest, they will say he had this disadvantage, that he was not an Eye witness, as they were, of the Principal matters of Fact in the Gospel, and that what he learnt from Revelation could not be so evident, as if like his Companions, he had seen and felt. It will be said, that at most, he understood but as much as they did, and that he ought not to be believ'd,

liev'd, but in such Parts where he confirms the History of the Gospel. Therefore in regard S. Paul does not pretend to the Office of an Historian, he is not to be credited but in some few Places. His Principal Character is that of a Doctor, who explains and argues. Upon those occasions, that is to say, quite throughout all his Epistles, it shall be lawful to appeal from S. Paul to the Tribunal of Human Logic: Since that Apostle is to be look'd upon as no other than a person of good ability to hold an Argument, seeing he was no way inspir'd. If such a System should get footing in the World, what would remain of Inspir'd among Christians? Very little: for by that means they take from us three fourth parts of the New Testament. There would no longer be one Book of it inspir'd: it might indeed contain something inspir'd; but it would be no more inspir'd in the composition of it, than any other Book, wherein an ordinary Author should have inserted Doctrines which Heaven had formerly reveal'd. For as those inserted Doctrines would not make the Book to be inspir'd, so neither would some Oracles scatter'd here and there in the New Testament, appropriate Inspiration to that Book. From whence I conclude, that when the Primitive and the New Christians profess'd to believe that the Sacred Books of the New Testament

were

were inspir'd, they never pretended barely to say, that the Apostles knew by Inspiration certain things which they had inserted therein, but that it was their Opinion, that the Book it self, or to explain my self more clearly, the Composition of the Book was the work of the Holy Ghost. This is a Reflection which I desire the Reader to remember, when I come to discourse of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books in General.

In that sense that *M. N.* would have us conceive what the New Testament is, it contains many human things about which it is lawful to dispute, whenever *S. Paul* or any other Apostle shall hold any Argument which is not conformable to *M. N.*'s Principles, He shall answer, This is no more than the Argument of a mere man; let us see whether his Argument agrees with *Aristotle's* Logic: If the Apostle has not follow'd the Rules of Consequences, we may imagine that we have no reason to hearken to him. He's an Apostle ——— that's no matter ——— when an Apostle wanders out of the way, I am not bound to follow him. *St. Paul* applies to Jesus Christ several Prophecies which the Holy Ghost appropriates to God in the Old Testament. And from thence a very strong Argument is drawn to prove the Divinity of
of

of Jesus Christ. The Socinians judge it a very hard matter to answer some parts of the first Chapter of the Epistle to

the Hebrews. Henceforward there will be no longer any difficulty about any of all those Oracles, if *M. N.* may be believed. There needs no more than to say, that St. Paul understood not the Oracles of the Old Testament; and therefore it shall be lawful to examine that Apostle by the Rules of Grammar and Logic. The Socinians are extremely obliged to *M. N.* for helping them to a way to rid themselves of all their

perplexing Doubts, if they are hardy enough to adopt him. Several among them have testified a great respect for the Scripture at the same time that they dishonour it by wrested Interpretations: they profess however to believe that it is the Work of God; that it is inspir'd in all the parts of it; that it contains no Contradiction, and that there is no receding from this Principle, without endangering the Christian Religion. Now while they hold such Ma-

See the *Racov. Cat. p. 47.*
If to two Interpretations of a very difficult place, we add a third.

Voxog. Prolegom. in N. T. c. 4. Wherefore the Authority of these Books is as great as that of God himself. So that when we read this Sacred Volume, or hear it read, we ought to think, that we hear God himself speaking from Heaven. *Id. in c. 1. Matth. v. 23.* For though all the holy Scripture be inspir'd by God, and that all the sacred Writers were as it were the Amanuenses of the Holy Ghost.

Vid. ibid. Prolegom. in N. T. c. 4. toward the end, and in 2. *Matth. v. 6.*

xims as these, it is impossible but that the *Socinians* must meet with great difficulties in the Scripture. But if they embrace *M. N's* Opinion, they will find a large Fountain of ready Answers; and in truth it may be said, that there are no Errors which may not be upheld by this new Method.

Though it should be said, that this new Method tends to annihilate the Use of the New Testament, and to bring men back to natural Reason, as the only Light which they ought to follow in Religion, it seems to me that they would say no more than what is just and right. 'Tis true, *M. N's* Method does not speak altogether so plainly, but it aims that way. That Author, to make use of a Comparison which a great Writer furnishes me withal, is like a sort of people who never leave whetting a Knife, till they have worn it to nothing. They cannot be content to clean off the Rust that sticks to it, and restoring the blade to the natural Brightness that first adorn'd it. Let us keep the middle way, without bringing back the Abuses with which men at other times had loaded Religion: Let us leave it a Body, to the end it may prove a support to our Souls.

It may be seen by what I have said, of what Consequence it is, to oppose the Career of *M. N's* System, and more and more

Hooker,
Eccles.
Pol.

more to confirm and settle Christians in their persuasion, that the Books of the New Testament were inspir'd. This is that which I pretend to make out clearly in this Treatise, which I divide into two parts. First, I shall shew in General that the Sacred Books of the New Testament were inspir'd; and while I demonstrate what the nature of that Inspiration is, I shall produce Principles, whereby to resolve all difficulties that are already, or may be, rais'd upon this Subject.

We have but two sorts of Proofs to satisfy a Christian about matters which have no dependance upon the first Principles of Reason: the unanimous consent of those Doctors that liv'd in the Primitive times of the Church; and the Holy Scripture when it speaks after a plain and decisive manner. These are the two sorts of Proofs which I shall make use of, to shew that the Sacred Books are inspir'd.

I begin with the Belief of the Primitive Church, after I have given the Reader two Admonitions; the one, that I do not undertake to drain all the Proofs that are to be found in this Fountain; it being my design to confine my self to what may bring the matter to a point of Demonstration, and to derive my Proofs from the first or most Primitive Ages of the Church.

The Holy Scriptures Inspired.

My second Advertisement is, that as *M. N.* assails the Body of the Sacred Books of the New Testament in gross, I am not bound to defend them otherwise than in the same manner. That Author believes, that they are no way inspir'd, that is to say, that the Holy Ghost was never concern'd in the Composition of them. For the repelling of this Attack, it is not requisite to follow the Sacred Books one after another, by shewing upon the Subject of every one of them, that they were effectually inspir'd. I shall therefore consider the several Sacred Books as one single Book; and I shall produce to the advantage of all together, all the Testimonies which I shall find favourable to any one in particular. 'Tis according to this Method that *M. N.* attacks them: for when he thought he had observ'd in any one of the Sacred Books any slip of human weakness, he infers from thence an Argument against all the rest. Let him in like manner be pleas'd to permit me to extend to all the Sacred Books whatever I shall meet with advantageous to any one, which ought to be allow'd me so much the rather, because there is not any one single, where there is not something to be met withal, which *M. N.* takes for a good Objection. If only one of the Sacred Books proves to be inspir'd, the Inspiration of that single Book secures the rest from the

the Objections which are made against them.

Though I speak in this manner, 'tis not that I am in fear for any one Sacred Book of the New Testament: the whole is safe, if men will but take the pains to consider the Testimonies of the Primitive Church in favour of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books; they will not find any one, for which there is not the Testimony of the Ancients: or if any one be more remiss than the rest, that negligence will be repair'd by the General Proofs that relate to all the parts of the New Testament.

CHAP. II.

The first Proof of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books of the New Testament, drawn from the manner after which the Ancients speak of it.

'TIS known how the Christians speak at this day of the Holy Scripture of the New Testament. According to their Style 'tis call'd *The Scripture*, by way of Excellency; the Sacred Oracles, the Word of God; when the Preacher takes his Text, he says, as it is written in the word of God; and the People for that

Reason believe themselves oblig'd to hearken with a devout Attention.

This Language no way agrees with *M. N's* System, who looks upon the Sacred Books as a work purely Human, and wherein there are faults which he would not pardon *Livy*, or any other prophane Historian. Were I of this Authors Opinion, I should be dreadfully troubled to hear the Christians speak as they do of the Holy Scripture; I should cry out Blasphemy; I should never endure that they should say of the Voice of a mortal man, 'tis the Voice of God and not of man.

'Tis to be suspected that *M. N.* says to himself, that it is one of those pieces of Superstition which are so rooted in the minds of the People, that it is not safe to decry them. But let him think what he pleases, the language of the Christians is the same at this day, as it has been all along: in that particular there has been no variation. In the purest Ages they express themselves in reference to the Scripture as we do now. I desire the most Zealous Disciples of *M. N.* to deny it. They cannot do it without speaking against their Consciences; or without shewing that they are altogether strangers to Antiquity.

To fortifie this Proof which I draw from the Appellations that the Ancients gave the Scripture, I think my self bound

bound to make two Observations. The first is, that the Language cannot proceed from any superstitious Aggravation. It was in use in the very first times when Christians spoke according to the simplicity of their Hearts, and when they had no leisure to corrupt the Truth by Rhetorick or Superstition. In that same Age of Innocence, they call'd the Writings of the New Testament *the Oracles of Heaven, the Word of God, the Holy Scripture*. Nor can this language be accus'd to have sprung up from the Corruption of after Ages, when Superstition extended her Empire. I love to speak, as they spoke at a time when the Church was a Virgin; if I may be allow'd to make use of the words of an Ancient Author.

My second Observation is this; that the Ancients, when they thus expressed themselves, honoured the New Testament, as the New Testament had honoured the Ancient. I explain my self thus; when the Old Testament is cited by the Apostles, they usually call it the *Scripture*, without any addition; that is, the Scripture by way of Excellency; as when St. Paul, speaking of an Oracle dictated by the Mouth of God himself, says, *For what saith the Scripture, cast out the Bondwoman and her Son.* And in another place, *And the Scripture foreseeing* Gal. 3. 8, *that God would justify the Heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham,*

ham, saying, *In thee shall all Nations be blessed.* I made choice of these two Passages on purpose, wherein St. Paul cites certain Oracles, that *M. N.* would not himself deny, but that it was God who spake them. The Apostle calls them *Scripture*. As he phrases it, *The Scripture saith thus, or God spoke This*, comes all to one sense. This is so true, that having said to

Rom. 11. 32. the *Romans*, *That God had concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all* : He speaks the same thing to the

Gal. 3. 22. *Galatians* in these words, *But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, &c.* By which it appears that the *Voice of God*, and *Scripture* signifie the same thing.

Thus then I argue upon the whole. The Apostles when they cited the Oracles of the Old Testament, comprehended them all under the Name of *Scripture*, as if they would have said, the *Scripture of God*. Now I find that immediately after the Apostles, the Saints also quoted the Writings of the Apostles under the Name of *Scripture* : they have paid the same Honour to the Writings of the Apostles, as the Apostles did to the Old Testament. Have I not reason then to conclude from thence, that it was the judgment of the Saints of the Primitive Church, that the Writings of the Apostles were no less the *Scripture of God*, than the Prophetic Writings wherein are recorded the Oracles of God ?

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

The second Proof, drawn from hence, that the Ancients have equall'd the Writings of the Apostles to the Oracles of the Old Testament,

IF what *M. N.* has asserted touching the writings of the Prophets were examined according to the Belief which the Primitive Church had of them, it would be soon acknowledg'd that this New System is not to be maintained by dint of Argument. The Proofs of which are every where to be found; For the Primitive Writers of the Christian Religion, being obliged to fetch from the Prophetic writings their Arguments to convince the *Jews*, or to confirm the Christians who acknowledged their Authority, this was the reason that they had frequent occasion to speak of the Inspiration of those Sacred Writings. So that we plainly see, that they are hardly ever cited by the Ancients without some Elogie drawn from the Sanctity of their Original. Sometimes 'tis the Word of God, sometimes 'tis the Holy Scripture, sometimes the Oracles of the Holy Ghost, and sometimes the Scripture divinely inspired. When the Primitive Christians quoted any passage of the Old Testament, it was as they phrased it the *Mouth of the Lord that spoke.*
But

But I do not speak this to divert me from al-
 ledging some Proofs.

Clemens Romanus who, as 'tis well known
 was contemporary with the Apostles, speak-
 ing of the Prophets, says, *That the Ministers*
of the Grace of God, instigated by the Holy Spi-
rit, spoke of Repentance. A little after that-
 reciting a Maxim drawn from the Old Te-
 stament, he assures us, that 'twas no more

Quod vaticinantes non
alio, quam verbo divino af-
flati agantur, vos quoque
iplos dicturos rer. Dial,
cum Triph. Jud. p.8.

Descendens in eos spiri-
tus Sanctus, Religionem ve-
ram discere volentes, peril-
los docendos esse statuit.
Id. ad Græc. Cohort. p.32.

* *Ceterum Dei homines*
pleni Spiritu Sancto, Et a
Deo inspirati, instituti quo-
que Prophetæ ordinari sunt
proinde fuere a Deo docti
Theophil. ad Autol. lib. 2.
p. 87.

than what the Holy Spirit
 recommended to us. *Justin*
Martyr speaks of the Inspi-
 ration of the Prophets, as of a
 Truth common to the *Jews*
 and *Christians*. And in a-
 nother place he says, that the
 Holy Spirit descended upon
 the Prophets, to the end
 they might reach all those
 that desired to be instructed
 in the true Religion.

Theophilus of Antiochia, asserts
 that the Prophets were men
 filled with the Holy Spirit
 and inspir'd by God. *Cle-*
mens of Alexandria is full of
 Passages, wherein he affirms

the same thing. I shall give no more than
 one, which is to be found at the beginning
 of his *Protreptic*. *Ipse est Dominus loquens in*
Isaia, ipse in Elia, ipse in ore Prophetarum. All
 the Primitive Authors honour the Prophets
 and their Writings, as being inspir'd by
 God. *Origen* alone would furnish me with
 several passages; of which to be convinc'd,
 there

there needs no more than only to read his *Philocalia*.

But to what purpose will some Body say, do I quote all these Proofs? The dispute is about the New Testament, not the Old one. I will not say, that I had any desire of making it my Business to let the World know the Character of *M. N.* by shewing that in the judgement of the Ancients, he does an infinite injury to the prophetic Writings, by the liberty of writing which he assumes to himself. That was never my Design; for I confine my self exactly to my Subject. My aim is still to make out, that the writings of the New Testament are inspir'd by the Holy Ghost. And is not the confirming the high Opinion which the Ancients had of the Prophets and their Writings, a keeping close to that Design? If at the same time I shew that the Ancients have equal'd the Apostles and their writings to the Prophets and their Prophecies, without proceeding any farther, that cannot be call'd a Deviation. For to be convinc'd that it is a Truth, there needs no more than to read the Passages which I have quoted in the Margin, the number of which I might have easily augmented; more especially would I have cited the Fathers who lived after the Council of Nice.

phets, but all from one and the same God.

Commentaria Apostolorum & Scripta Prophetarum sequuntur.
p. 98. *Iust. Martyr.* Quia universi Testamenti Ministri. uno eodemque Spiritu inspirati locuti sunt. *Theophil. ad Autol.* l. 3. p. 125. Deus Eternus & Unigenitus & verbum incarnatum predicatum, & a Prophetis omnibus & Apostolis, & ab ipsa spiritu. *Iren. adv. Hæreticos.* l. 3. c. 21. Unus enim & idem spiritus Dei quæ in prophetis præconavit, &c. Ipse in Apostolis Annuntiavit. ib. c. 35. Chap.

*Iren. ad-
ver. heret.
lib. 3. c. 11.
Because
first the
Apostles,
secondly
the Pro-*

CHAP. IV.

The third Proof drawn from the Distinction which the Ancients made between the Canonical and Apocryphal Books.

THIS Distinction takes place in respect of both Testaments. There are join'd to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament several Pieces purely Human, as the Books of *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Baruc*, *Macabee's*, &c. which are call'd by the name of *Apocrypha*. A word, of which the true Original is very uncertain. But whether it signifie conceal'd or obscure, or whether it have any other sense, certain it is that those Books which are added to the Scripture, though they are not of divine Authority, are call'd *Apocrypha*.

If the Books which are added to the Old Testament are not admitted to be Canonical, 'tis not because they are defective in their matter. There are some of them whose Doctrine is sound, and their Instructions pure, so that there has been no scruple made to read them publickly in the Church. I dare presume to say there is such a Portion of Apocryphal Books which is more Instructive and more edifying, than such a portion of books we call Canonical. Wherefore then are they rejected as Apocryphal? I know

very

very well that several Marks of human Frailty are to be discover'd in them ; but the chief Ground of their being rejected is, because they are Books which the Holy Ghost has not inspir'd, the Finger of God appears not in them: the good things which are there to be found, flow not immediately from the Spring. Moreover we have reason to examine and suspect them, because they are not recommended to us by Persons actuated by the infallible Spirit of God.

This Reason is express'd by the Ancients in other terms: for they say, that the Apocryphal Books added to the Old Testament, want Canonical Authority, because they were written by persons who were no Prophets, and who lived after *Malachi*, the last of the Prophets. Wherein they followed *Josepbus*, who has deriv'd from thence the grand Character of the difference which we ought to make between the Canonical Books and the Apocryphal. The words of the Author are so remarkable as not to be omitted. *There can* Answer to
Appion.
L. i. c. 2.
be nothing more certain, than the Writings authoriz'd among us ; because they cannot be subject to any Contradiction ; in regard that there is nothing approv'd but what the Prophets wrote some Ages ago ; according to the purity of Truth, by the Inspiration and Agitation of the Spirit of God.

They have also written all that pass'd from the time of Artaxerxes to our Time. But by reason there has not been, as formerly, a successive Series of the Prophets, there is not the same Credit given to the Books which I have mention'd.

mention'd. The Books written after the Prophet *Malachi* have been constantly reject-

ed, in regard he was the last Writer whom the Holy Ghost inspir'd, under the Old Te-

Euseb. l. 8.

De monst.

Evangel.

Quod ab illo tempore servatorum nullum exstet Sacrum Volumen.

What I have said in respect of the Old Testament, takes place in relation to the New. Several Books of Piety were compos'd in the Primitive Church; the Authors were Persons of Worth, and the Books were so useful, that the Reading of them was not only recommended to private Persons, but they made no scruple to read them in publick. For example, the Epistle of Saint *Clement* had the same Honour. Wherefore was it that those Books were not put into the number of Canonical; that is to say, of those Books that are the constant Rule of our Faith and Manners? It was not always because they were in some things erroneous, but by reason they were not inspir'd by the Holy Ghost: that was sufficient to hinder them from being received for Canonical. The Question that was put, when there was a Dispute about any Book of which they doubted, was to know, whether or no it were written by a Person inspir'd. Thence it came to pass, that in the History of *Eusebius* we find that *Dionysius* Bishop of *Alexandria*, pronouncing his Sentence upon the *Apocalypsis*, said, that he acknowledged it to be the work

work of some Holy Man inspir'd by the Spirit of God. 'Tis known also that Origen ^{Reor e-} speaking of the Book written by *Hermas*, ^{nim san-} said, That he believ'd it to be a *Writing* di- ^{si cujus-} vinely inspir'd; a certain proof that they ^{dam, &} believ'd those Books which the Church has ^{divino} admitted as Canonical, were inspir'd by the ^{spiritu} Holy Ghost: ^{afflasi vi-} ^{ri id opus} ^{esse. Eu-}

feb. h. e. l. 7. c. 21. *Quæ Scriptura valde mihi utilis videtur, Et ut puto, divinitus inspirata.* Origen. l. 10. *reptam Epist. ad Rom. c. 16, Com. 14.*

CHAP. V.

The Fourth Proof drawn from the honour which the Ancients paid to the Sacred Books of the New Testament.

WE may draw a very strong Argument to prove that the Primitive Church believ'd that the Sacred Books of the New Testament were inspired, from the Honour and Reverence which they paid them. I shall begin with that Holy awe which kept the Ancients from attempting any alterations in the Sacred Writings. It was a piece of rashness and Sacrilege to adulterate them either by adding or diminishing. They were laden with *Anathemas* who were so bold as to lay their mending Hands upon those Sacred Writings. ^{Addenti aut detrabenti parna non modi-} ^{ca. Iren. adv. He-} ^{ref. l. 3.}

VVe c. 30.

*Quanta
porro au-
dacia sit
ejusmodi
facinus
ne ipsos
quidem*

*ignorare credibile est, aut enim sacras scripturas à spiritu san-
cto dictatas esse non credunt, ac proinde infideles sunt, aut se-
metipso spiritu sancto sapientiores esse existimant; ac proinde
quid aliud sunt quam Demoniaci. Euseb. h. e. l. 5. c. ult.*

We find in the Ecclesiastical History that the Heretics who denied the Divinity of our Lord, had the confidence to falsifie the Scripture, to accommodate the Text to their Opinions. Upon which an Author of the Primitive Ages says, that it was not likely that the Heretics were ignorant how criminal an Enterprize of that nature was; For, says he, either they believe not that the Sacred Scriptures were dictated by the Holy Ghost; and so are Infidels; or they imagine themselves to be wiser than the Holy Ghost, and then what are they other then Demoniacs.

*Euseb. l. 4.
29.*

They had an inviolable Veneration for the Sacred Scripture. *Tatianus*, for having only presumed to put the Epistles of *St. Paul* into more elegant Language, incurred the Censure, which may be seen in the Historian last cited. If the Church were so jealous of the words of the Scripture, we may easily judge of the Indignation of the Christians when they saw that any body durst presume to violate the Text it self, either by addition or diminution.

'Tis clear, that the Christians would never have been so sensible of injury done to the Scripture, if they had not believed it to be the work of the Holy Spirit. Some small fragment of Piety affixed to human Works would never have been a crime of Sacrilege. For example,

example, I see not what great harm it could be, to sow to *S. Paul's Epistle to Philemon*, some little Discourse upon that Indulgence, which is due from Christian Masters to their Servants, were it true, that the Epistle to *Philemon* is a Peice, wherein the Holy Spirit had no Share. 'Tis true, there may be something said, in dislike of such an Act, in regard that Sincerity requires, that other Mens Works should be let alone in their natural Dress. Nevertheless the Miscarriage deserves not to be treated with the Penalties of Sacrilege: there is no reason to make such a noise about it, as the Primitive Christians did upon the Alterations that were made in the Writings of the New Testament.

Nothing more clearly shews the Opinion which the Ancients had of the Inspiration of the Sacred Books, than the Honor which they paid 'em in looking upon 'em as Sovereign Decrees in Matters of Religion. For which Reason it was, that in several Councils they were plac'd upon a Throne, as they would have seated Jesus Christ himself had he come visibly to preside in those Holy Assemblies. There was the same Honor paid to his Word, as they would have done to his Person. Which clearly shews with what an Eye of Veneration they look'd upon the Sacred Writings of the New Testament.

This Honor also no less visibly appears in the use which the Ancients made of Scripture to confirm the Faith of the Christians. The Doctors of the Primitive Church allow

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a Sovereign Rank to the New Testament. There is no longer any Hesitation, after the Voice of these Oracles has been once heard. These are the *Urims* and *Thummim* of the New Covenant; after they once had seen their Decision, it was a Crime to appeal.

When we seriously consider, that this is a Submission and Compliance in Religion it self, we ought to acknowledge, that this Honor was not paid to the Sacred Books, but because they were, or at least because they were thought to be the Books of God, who is the only Lord of the Conscience. And the Truth of this Reflection will be agreed to, whenever it shall be call'd to mind, that we speak of a time when the Christians perfectly understood this privilege of the Almighty. They were very nice in this particular. Wherefore did they not obey those Emperors that oppos'd the Course of Christianity? It was the Lord had spoken. Wherefore did they not believe so many Philosophers whose Example and Illusions so strongly supported Paganism? It was the Lord had said it. Wherefore did they forsake the Synagogue, that Synagogue which Divine Mercy had appointed to be the Guardian of the ancient Oracles? It was the Lord had spoken. The Scripture of the New Testament was more powerful than the Emperors, and triumph'd over the Reputation which the great Doctors had enjoy'd so long in all the Schools of the World. The Reason is, because that in comparison
of

of God, Man is nothing: when God speaks, no Body else is to be heard. Therefore the Christians being convinced that the Almighty spoke in the Writings of the New Testament, they yielded with an awful Submission to the Decisions which they found therein.

This was never contradicted by Hereticks; they durst not appeal from the Words of an Apostle, because they were persuaded, that they were the Words of the Holy Spirit. The Method which they usually made use of to avoid the Weight of that Authority was to mutilate the Scriptures, or to corrupt the Sense by wrested Explanations. But when it could be prov'd, that such a Writing was Apostolical, or that such a Sense was the meaning of the Apostle, the most obstinate Hereticks would submit, at least they had nothing to say. It is needless to cite Authors upon a Subject for which Proofs may be found almost in every Page of the Writings of the Primitive Church. Moreover there have been so many Occasions to shew, that she has always look'd upon the Scripture as the Rule of Faith, that these Proofs are become common. There needs no more for a Man to do, but cast his Eye upon our Books of Controversie, to see what have been the Opinions of the Fathers upon this Subject.